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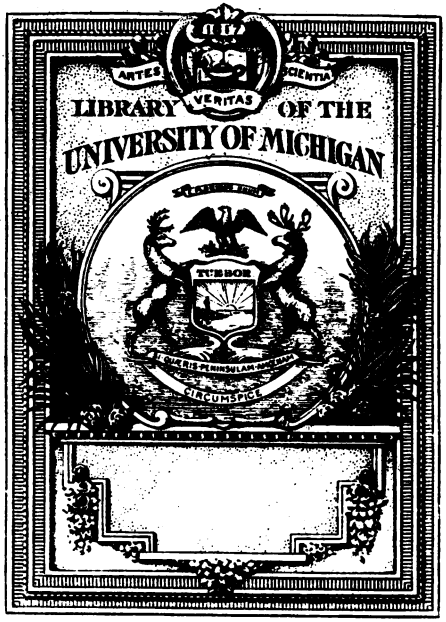
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Voltaire in the Shades;

OR,

DIALOGUES

ON THE

DEISTICAL CONTROVERSY.

Refellere ſine pertinaciâ, et refelli ſine iracundiâ parati ſumus. Non tam Authores in diſputando, quam rationis momenta quærenda ſunt.

TULL.

LONDON:

Printed for G. PEARCH, (N°. 12.) Cheapſide;
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INTRODUCTION.

THE confidence of philoſophical ſuperiority which the Infidel writers aſſume leaves a ſtrong impreſſion on young minds. Conſcious of this impreſſion, but unwilling to build his belief on any other foundation than the reſult of his own enquiries, the Author of the following pages, at an early time

12-6-46 HBD

of life, reſolved on a careful peruſal and a candid examination of the arguments of thoſe modern Philoſophers who arrogate to themſelves the honourable title of Free-thinkers. He read their writings; and, amazed ſometimes at their ſophiſtry, and ſometimes at the falſehood of their aſſertions, he gave vent to the warmth of a youthful indignation, and committed his remarks to paper. Theſe were the firſt ſketches of the Dialogues which are now offered

to

to the Public. If it ſhould be ſaid that ſome names, reſpectable in the world of letters, are treated with too much freedom, he would reply, that in preparing theſe ſheets for the preſs, he was unwilling to reſtrain the indignation which he felt at Twenty againſt the ſophiſtry that would deſtroy the deareſt hope of his heart, the hope of yet meeting the deceaſed friend in another and better ſtate of exiſtence.

PERHAPS it may be ſaid, that here is a confeſſion of prejudice: what one earneſtly wiſhes, one eaſily believes. Yes, it is ſometimes ſo; but there are examples to the contrary. An affectionate mother who earneſtly wiſhes the recovery of her child, will, from that very earneſtneſs, be jealous of every ſymptom, and alarmed with the fear of death in the ſlighteſt danger. When one earneſtly wiſhes for immortality, like the parent, he will be alarmed at every pre-

pretence which offers to disprove the validity of his tenure, and will view every argument not only in its utmoſt force, but often with a magnifying dread and jealouſy. And thus, that anxiety, which ſome would term prejudice, when joined with a want of opportunity or capacity to examine the ſubject, by firſt begetting a ſuſpicious alarm in the mind, has been the means of making more infidels than all the writings of Voltaire.

THE arts of misrepresentation and insinuation, and of alarming the uninstructed, so eminently possessed by the infidel writers, cannot fail of their effect on the multitude. Without the strong impression of some leading data, one must be lost in the labyrinth of their various reasonings, and wander about like themselves, in sceptical giddiness. But the leading data are easily obtained. The Creation discovers Design, Design implies Intelligence, there is therefore a Governing Mind:

Mind: This eaſy demonſtration kept ever in view, with the only rational anſwer of a queſtion which it leads to, will ſecure every good heart and intelligent capacity a ſafe paſſage through all the windings and turnings, and all the gloſſes of infidelity. The queſtion here meant is, What is Man? or, in other words, Whether or no is human condition an impeachment of the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Author of Being?

To this grand queſtion there is no ſatisfactory anſwer to be found among the writers for Infidelity. The reſult of their whole arguments is thus ſummed up by a diſtinguiſhed writer of the Party. "The "whole," (it is of Religion he is ſpeaking, and Religion of every kind is no other than an attempt to anſwer the above grand queſtion) "The whole," ſays he, "is a riddle, an "ænigma, an inexplicable myſ- "tery. Doubt, uncertainty, ſuſ- "pence of judgment, appear "the

" the only reſult of our moſt
" accurate ſcrutiny concerning
" this ſubject. But ſuch is the
" frailty of human reaſon, and
" ſuch the irreſiſtible contagion
" of opinion, that even this
" deliberate doubt could ſcarce
" be upheld, did we not en-
" large our view, and oppoſing
" one ſpecies of ſuperſtition to
" another, ſet them a quarrelling,
" while we ourſelves, during
" their fury and contention,
" happily make our eſcape into
" the calm, though obſcure,
" regions of Philoſophy *."

* Concluſion of H—'s Eſſay on Religion.

By

By theſe obſcure regions into which he means that the wiſe man will retire, nothing but deliberate and fixed Sceptiſm can be underſtood: And thus, having deſtroyed the belief of a future ſtate, becauſe ſome Religioniſts of all ages have talked nonſenſe about it, no other anſwer to the grand queſtion remains but this, That human condition, where virtue is often to the laſt unrewarded, and vice unpuniſhed, is indeed an impeachment of the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Author of

Being;

Being; or to ſpeak in the ſceptical ſtyle, of the Power, whatever it be, which produced the ſyſtem of things.

OTHER anſwer than this, without taking in the conſideration of a future ſtate, can never be given. He who ſends ſuffering virtue for its beſt comfort to the obſcure regions of doubt, by the moſt certain inference aſcribes a want of intelligence or of goodneſs to his Maker, and excludes him from the moral world. Yet we have only

only to open our eyes to behold the moſt aſtoniſhing demonſtrations of Intelligence every where ſtamped on the natural world. He therefore who would exclude this Intelligent Mind from the moral world, is infinitely more abſurd than he who would confeſs that the barren deſerts of Libya were the work of Infinite Wiſdom, and yet at the ſame time aſſert that the fertile plains of the Eaſt and Weſt were the fortuitous offspring of, and only ſuſtained by, Blind Chance.

Yet

Yet we muſt be gravely told that ſuch abſurd excluſion of the Deity from the moral world is "the only reſult of our moſt "accurate ſcrutiny concerning "the ſubject;" and "that it is "the frailty of human reaſon "that this deliberate doubt "can ſcarce be upheld," unleſs we amuſe ourſelves with the nonſenſe of antient and modern ſuperſtition!

But enough---What may be called the machinery of theſe Dialogues, and the ſuppoſition of

of the death of Voltaire and Rouſſeau, the Author, without the leaſt concern, leaves to the mercy of the Critic, and has only further to inform his Reader that he is not a Clergyman.

E R R A T A.

Page 114, *line* 6, *for*, of pervading a mere plaſtic cauſe, *read*, of a mere pervading plaſtic cauſe.

P. 178. *l.* 1, *of the Note*, *for* Elſiſa, *r.* Eloiſa.

P. 183, *laſt l. but one*, *for*, I would to have urged, *r.* I would have urged.

P. 186, *l.* 1, *for*, you counteract, *r.* you do not counteract.

DIALOGUES, &c.

VOLTAIRE.

WHITHER am I rapt in an inſtant! How lightly I move! And have I indeed paſſed the dark gulph of Death, and become an unembodied ſpirit! Well, I find death is not the period of my exiſtence, as I often have thought and wiſhed. But how ſolitary do I ſtray here! No angels are with me;—but neither have any devils ſeized

me, though the horrors of my death-bed preſented them as howling around my couch. My horrors! I yet feel them a little; for I am not yet arrived at certainty. However, thanks to my fears, all is ſafe.—I died kiſſing a crucifix, and abſolved of my ſins by a good Prieſt.—If Mohammed be the Prophet of God, I may at leaſt get into the ſecond or third heaven, for the praiſe I have ſometimes beſtowed on his religion.—If the Bramins and all the contradictory Moraliſts of the Eaſt be acceptable to God, then high is my place in heaven; for who has done more than I to prove that every man ſhould have a ſett of morals and a religion of his own? Yes, this ſurely is the generous plan of Heaven: yet, thanks again to my fears, I am ſome-

how

how pleaſed that I died a Chriſtian. But who comes here, ſmiling with ſelf-ſatisfaction? By heaven, 'tis either a viſionary Saint from a monaſtery, or a Bramin juſt eſcaped from the torture of his iron-neck-band. Ha, indeed, is it you, Rouſſeau?

ROUSSEAU.

CHEARFUL and elated with my immortality, I ſeek ſome virtuous angel to conduct me to the Supreme. I have juſt now riſen from a happy death-bed.—It is good * for the world that I was born!

VOLTAIRE.

In heaven already, Rouſſeau! Faith, I never knew what you did to deſerve it.

* For theſe modeſt ſentiments ſee Rouſſeau's Letters.

ROUSSEAU.

If mankind would not be happy, would not be wise, was it my fault? Have not I shewed them how to be happy and virtuous? And depraved as mankind are, I surely shall have some disciples in the latest ages.

VOLTAIRE.

No doubt your principles are well calculated to make men happy; witness the blessed effects they had on your own sweet contented temper.

ROUSSEAU.

What are your disciples? The burlesquers of Virtue and every thing serious. How absurd are your pretences to piety towards the Divinity! One may safely despise the idea which different

 superstitions

ſuperſtitions give of him: but to pour ridicule on him in an abſtracted philoſophical light, as you have done in your CANDIDE, what impiety! But I ſee your looks anticipate your puniſhment, while yonder comes an angel for me.

VOLTAIRE.

His looks, indeed, pronounce him from heaven: but it is the ſoul of Socrates, and his eye is on me. Divine Socrates! thou who broughteſt Philoſophy from heaven to dwell with men, haſt thou come to conduct me thither?

SOCRATES.

VOLTAIRE, that is not my office. A few hours for recollection is permitted to the ſoul after it leaves the body ere it is brought before the Judge, and ſometimes it is allowed a much longer

abode in this region of unjudged ſpirits. During this interval the Dead are often allowed the converſation of one another. This is now your ſituation. Concern for my brethren of mankind ſtill actuates my thoughts, and I am partly acquainted with the preſent ſtate of Philoſophy in the world. Many things in it amaze me; and it is by a ſingular privilege that I am permitted to have an hour's converſation with you, you who have been a leader in modern Philoſophy, that, if poſſible, I may learn to account for what now aſtoniſhes me,

VOLTAIRE.

HAPPY fate, that I have ſo ſoon met the godlike Socrates! But to fit me for confabulation, eaſe my mind at once, and

and tell me your opinion of the Chriſtia
ſuperſtition.—Speak, is it not ſuch?

SOCRATES.

To tell you what I know for certai
I am not permitted. My deſire was
talk with you as a Philoſopher, and th
deſire was granted, but no more. An
ſwer me, I conjure you, without glo
or digreſſion.

I AM often at a loſs to conceive th
nature of your modern Philoſoph
When Locke was upon his death-be
he wrote to Collins, "This life affor
"no ſolid ſatisfaction but the conſc
"ouſneſs of doing well, and the hop
"of another." My Philoſophy has bee
long admired, and this ſentence is th
very eſſence of it; yet, amazing to me
this ſentence of Locke has been treate

with all the contempt of ridicule, and pronounced unworthy of a Philoſopher by one * who generally ſpeaks the ſenſe of your party. Explain to me how is the hope of another life unworthy of a Philoſopher?

VOLTAIRE.

THE Philoſopher ſcorns to be duped either by the fears, or the hopes of ſuperſtition. He profeſſes the nobleſt freedom of enquiry; and it is unworthy of him to aſſent by gueſs. He demands demonſtration.

SOCRATES.

THE metaphyſical doctrines of an after-life and a Providence are incapable of abſolute demonſtration.

* Dr. Middleton.

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

THE Philoſopher is at leaſt a ſceptic on theſe points. He builds his happineſs on a ſurer foundation.

SOCRATES.

ON what foundation?

VOLTAIRE.

As the calamities of life are above his controul, his firſt care is to arm himſelf with a fortitude above being concerned at whatever may happen, and hence his happineſs.

SOCRATES.

TELL me, how would he behave were his deareſt friend, the brother of his ſoul, ſuddenly to fall dead at his feet?

VOLTAIRE.

HE may wiſh it had been otherwiſe; but as ſorrow will not reſtore his friend

to

to life, he will look on it as an accident which he ought to have expected, and will indulge himſelf in no further grief.

SOCRATES.

FROM hence I perceive, that his fortitude is built on the extinction of the human paſſions; and that the happineſs it acquires, is an ungenerous indifference. Well, but ſuppoſe our Philoſopher on his own death-bed, what are his feelings when Death's cold hand is upon him?

VOLTAIRE.

WITH the moſt perfect tranquillity he knows he muſt die, his elements muſt reſolve into their kinds *, and he

* Such were the pretences of Toland.

complains

complains no more of it than a tree does of being cut down.

SOCRATES.

HAS your Philoſopher any religion?

VOLTAIRE.

YES, the nobleſt. He adores the Supreme —

SOCRATES.

HOLD—I know your flouriſhes; but before I can admire his piety, I muſt be convinced of what he expects and believes. The belief of an inviſible agency wants proof ſufficient for him, and the hopes and dread of futurity are unworthy of your Philoſopher. For what then does he adore the Supreme?

VOLTAIRE.

FOR the wonders of this glorious Univerſe—he worſhips almighty Nature.

SOCRA-

SOCRATES.

In other words, he admires * a certain wonderful Power, that by a kind of fatality made and ſupports the univerſe, but which has no intelligence of the moral world. Now what influence has this religion on his conduct?

VOLTAIRE.

The idea of beauty † chears his ſoul, and confirms him in his favourite fortitude.

SOCRATES.

Would it ſupport him in ſevere diſtreſs? Suppoſe your Philoſopher re-

* This is a fair account of Shaftesbury's turgid apoſtrophe to the Creator or Nature, which, according to Newton's ſentiments, is mere Atheiſm. *Veneramur autem et colimus ob dominium. Deus enim ſine dominio, providentiâ, et cauſis finalibus, nihil aliud eſt quam fatum et natura.* Princip. Schol. Gen. ſub finem.

† Shaftesbury almoſt paſſim.

duced

duced from affluence and health to the loweſt poverty and the ſevereſt pangs of diſeaſe.

VOLTAIRE.

He would eſteem it as unavoidable fate, and nobly would—

SOCRATES.

Hold—I can bear you no longer.—When one is wounded in the tendereſt part, on the death of a beloved friend, human Nature muſt feel, and bleeding Friendſhip will anxiouſly enquire, "Where is now the partner of my ſoul?" And if the belief can in thought follow the deceaſed to a ſtate of happy exiſtence, the anguiſh which Nature ſtirs in the boſom will then, and then only, feel the relief adapted to its pain. A ray of penſive complacency

cency beams acroſs the mind, which now, arguing on its own feelings, builds a ſyſtem of divine Philoſophy on theſe inclinations which it finds interwoven with the ſoul; and looking forward to its own departure from the body, encourages the joyful hope, ſo dear, ſo acceptable to Nature, of yet again meeting its abſent companion, never more to be divided by accident or Death.

On the other hand, your Philoſopher's whole ſum of perfection conſiſts in a total indifference to the accidents of life, in doing unhallowed violence to his own feelings, and in ſtifling the affections and workings of Nature. His mind wraps itſelf up in an apathy, gloomy, hopeleſs and ungenerous, the tranquillity of a brute.

a brute. Nor is he leſs unamiable in the indifference with which he would fortify himſelf againſt the approaches of his own death. Every hope and fear of futurity which Nature whiſpers to the ſoul, he rejects as deficient in proof, and unworthy of a Philoſopher: but that fortitude, brutal as it is, which he boaſts to have acquired, is now found a deluſion. It was his principal care to extinguiſh and root out the affections and workings of Nature in purſuit of a fortitude, which not being founded on the hopes and feelings of Nature, is in the hour of diſtreſs unattainable! In the days of health and joy he may think he has attained it; and though he may have rendered his heart callous at the death of a friend, yet at the approach

of

of his own, unleſs he is abſorbed in an unthinking ſtupidity, injured Nature will then plead her own cauſe, and painfully convince him, that ſhe cannot repoſe herſelf in the hopeleſs indifference and apathy of Philoſophy. Nor in death only does injured Nature aſſert her claim to be heard: in the horrors of poverty and in the torture of diſeaſe ſhe will ſeek relief; and in that breaſt where juſtice has been taught to hope no future reward, and villany to fear no tranſmundane puniſhment, the conſequence is certain; Nature will be heard. In the one caſe, fraud will enſue, and in the other, the only refuge of your Philoſopher is ſelf-murder, an exit truly worthy of ſo deteſtable a character. Nor is it only injured Nature that will in theſe

caſes

cases compel your Philosopher to these reliefs; his own Philosophy also leads him to them. On his own principles, in these extremes, it is his duty to do so; for on his principles it can never be proved a duty to suffer, nor a vice to catch at the relief that can avoid detection.

Such, Voltaire, is the idea of modern Philosophy I have been able to collect from yours, from Bolingbroke's, and the writings of your other friends. The fortitude it would attain is exactly the unnatural apathy of the Stoicks; but giving up the hopes of immortality which that sect indulged, it has destroyed the best, the only motives of virtue, and therefore has no claim to that love of it, for which the disciples of Zeno were justly honoured.

But you and your friends have ſometimes talked of immortality.—I know your writings are ſtrangely contradictory; but will a good ſentiment in one page, prove that you have not a bad one in the next? I know your modern Philoſophers have a method, which would have been deſpiſed by antiquity: After building your ſyſtems with the utmoſt care, you throw in a few ſentences of a contrary tendency; and to theſe you loudly and abſurdly appeal as your true meaning, when the horrid conſequences of your ſyſtems are objected to you. Juſtly, O Rouſſeau, have you repreſented the moderns as forming a ſelf-contradictory monſter, a fiend deſtructive to every generous feeling, to every virtue, and which they dignify with the name of Philoſophy.

ROUS-

ROUSSEAU.

- GODLIKE Socrates, turn not away—

SOCRATES.

MY pity for the hopeleſs ſtate of Philoſophy affects me with melancholy; I haſten away, to ſhake it off in the regions of the Bleſſed. [*Ex.* SOC.

ROUSSEAU.

SOCRATES, alas! has left us. Two other ſpirits draw near. Anxiety caſts a gloom over their piercing eyes.—

Enter JULIAN *and* PORPHYRY.

VOLTAIRE.

BY ſome faculty yet nameleſs to me, I know you, illuſtrious Emperor! Modern times have done juſtice to your virtues, and have reſcued your character from the aſperſions of the Galileans.

JULIAN.

BELOVED Voltaire—but what have you done? Have you diſproved the account of my being groſsly addicted to ſorcery and divination?

VOLTAIRE.

No.

JULIAN.

HAVE you removed the diſgrace of my unfairneſs in prohibiting the children of Chriſtians to learn to read, or to ſtudy the liberal arts?

VOLTAIRE.

No — but our age deſpiſes Nazianzen's account of your death, and gives entire credit to that of Ammianus Marcellinus.

JULIAN.

I THANK your age for its indulgent biaſs. But how ſtands the contro-

verſy

verſy againſt the Galileans? I hope glorioufly: many of our friends daily paſs this way.

VOLTAIRE.

INDULGE me firſt, illuſtrious Julian.—Was you rewarded or puniſhed for your attacks on Nazaritiſm?

JULIAN.

NEITHER as yet. We are ſtill in great uncertainty of its truth or falſity, and are deeply concerned in the iſſue. Porphyry, Celſus, and many more of us have yonder region appointed for our reſidence. If the Nazarene was an Impoſtor, the Gods are indebted to us, and we have crowns in reſerve. If he was not an Impoſtor—

PORPHYRY.

ENOUGH, O Julian.—The purpoſe of our meeting Voltaire was to learn

with what new weapons Chriſtianity is now attacked. The weapons, we are told, are almoſt totally changed ſince our days.

VOLTAIRE.

Yes, and it was high time to change them; I wiſh your weapons had never been uſed. Chriſtianity now boaſts of your attacks as one of its cardinal proofs.

JULIAN.

In what inſtances?

VOLTAIRE.

You have confeſſed that the Galilean and the fiſherman Peter wrought many miracles, and have abſurdly aſcribed them to magic.

PORPHYRY.

To deny the miracles was in our days impoſſible: the teſtimony of them

on

on every hand bore us down. Magic was in our days believed in, and to that we aſcribed the miracles which ourſelves were convinced had happened.

VOLTAIRE.

And magic being now univerſally diſcredited, you are become witneſſes to Chriſtianity.

JULIAN.

But how does modern Philoſophy manage this part of the argument?

VOLTAIRE.

We aſſert, that a miracle never was, or can be wrought.

JULIAN.

What! has the Deity no power to work a miracle? or are there no circumſtances in which it would become

his goodneſs, as Governor of the world, to give one?

VOLTAIRE.

We ſometimes wave the argument, and ſometimes deny both.

JULIAN.

Well, if theſe weapons ſucceed, the world is but little improved in wiſdom ſince our days.

VOLTAIRE.

But we aſſert, beſides, that a miracle is incapable of proof.

"What can we reaſon but from what we know?"

And we have no * Experience of miracles being wrought.

PORPHYRY.

But by what miracle was it that ſo many people imagined they ſaw Jeſus do miracles?

* This is H——'s principal argument.

ROUS-

ROUSSEAU.

ALLOW me a moment. — I myſelf have done * ſuch ſeeming miracles as aſtoniſhed a whole country-fair. Had I lived among the old Hebrews, I could have exceeded Elijah, or any of their prophets.

JULIAN.

THE inference you would draw may do well enough where people do not compare and examine: but will a fellow's ſwallowing fire, and ſpueing needles and ribbands, lighting a candle with the point of a knife, and making a walking-ſtick dance; ſuch miracles as you, Rouſſeau, boaſt to have performed;

* See Rouſſeau's Third Letter from the Mountains.

will

will theſe bear a compariſon with the Galilean's giving ſight to the blind, and raiſing the dead to life? I loſe patience with you—our cauſe is injured by your nonſenſe.

PORPHYRY.

VOLTAIRE, your anſwer to my queſtion. By what miracle did ſo many people imagine they ſaw the miracles of Chriſt?

VOLTAIRE.

To be deceived is no uncommon thing.

PORPHYRY.

BUT it was impoſſible the Apoſtles could be deceived in the many inſtances, whether a man was a leper or lame, or whether he was next moment cured

cured and reſtored to ſtrength and activity.

ROUSSEAU.

BUT I have proved that it requires a perfect knowledge in Nature, ſuch as perhaps was never attained, before one can pronounce that what aſtoniſhes us is truly a miracle.

JULIAN.

YOUR head muſt have been full of the tricks of a juggler when you ſaid ſo. It indeed requires knowledge in Natural Philoſophy to know whether lighting a candle with the point of a knife, and the other chymical feats you have mentioned, be trick or miracle: but nothing is more inapplicable to the caſe of the Apoſtles; they were perfectly judges of almoſt every miracle they

they ſaw, which were an appeal to the ſenſes of the plaineſt man; and till the world can diſcover ſome property in Nature that will give inſtant ſight to the blind and life to the dead, to talk of the little tricks of chymiſtry in compariſon of the miracles of Jeſus, is equally childiſh and impertinent.

PORPHYRY.

VOLTAIRE, your further anſwer to my queſtion.

VOLTAIRE.

INTERESTED views, ſuch as to head a party, have produced many bold aſſertions.

PORPHYRY.

YES, but the deſign of the falſe aſſertor is to obtain ſome advantages, which muſt appear to him by that means

means attainable, when he hazards the falſe aſſertion: but it is hard to prove that any worldly advantage could appear attainable to the Apoſtles. On the contrary, torture and death was every day the conſequence of publiſhing their aſſertions; and theſe conſequences were often expreſsly foretold by their Maſter. Human Nature cannot act without motive, and the Apoſtles muſt have had ſome advantage in view: but it is hard to prove, on the principles of human action what that advantage was, unleſs it conſiſted of a hope in the favour of the Deity, a hope intirely incompatible with a conſcience of their own fraud. That they believed their own aſſertions, they gave the greateſt proofs that men could give. They braved

every

every thing dreadful to human nature in profecuting their desire to communicate to mankind, what they esteemed a blessing to themselves. How, I say, do you account for this greatest of all miracles, that so many men so firmly believed they saw the miracles of Jesus?

VOLTAIRE.

When we are hard urged by our adversaries, we tell them plainly, that if the whole * English nation had asserted that Queen Elizabeth had returned to life after being dead and buried, we were resolved not to believe it.

JULIAN.

A happy argument truly! to shift the supposition from a case which carries the appearance of the greatest

* H———'s Essay on Miracles.

bene-

benevolence of the Deity, to a caſe that could have no utility in it at all.

VOLTAIRE.

SHAFTESBURY, a Philoſopher who would have reflected honour on the Porch, Shafteſbury generouſly gives up the evidence of miracle, becauſe, ſays he, every Religion lays claim to it.

JULIAN.

SHAFTESBURY is very obliging. But will Reaſon demand this conceſſion?

VOLTAIRE.

MY Philoſophy of Hiſtory will not only ſhew the reaſonableneſs, but the neceſſity of the conceſſion.

JULIAN.

JULIAN.

YOUR Philoſophy of Romance, you ſhould have ſaid.

——Quicquid Græcia mendax
Audet in hiſtoria——

and even Varillas are nothing to you.

PORPHYRY.

AN unhappy truth has ſlipt from our ingenious friend Middleton. If there had never been a true miracle, the world, ſays he, had never heard ſo many ſtories of falſe ones. Baſe coin is a ſure proof that there is ſuch a thing as the ſterling; and if the Chriſtians would take the advice * of their Maſter, and judge of opinions as carefully as bankers diſtinguiſh the good

* Γίνεσθε δόκιμοι τραπεζῖται, τὰ μὲν ἀποδοκιμάζοντες, τὸ δὲ καλὸν κατέχοντες. A ſaying of Chriſt preſerved by Origen.

coin

coin from the bad, in place of giving up the evidence of miracles, becauſe every Religion pretends to it, they might from that circumſtance, from a comparative view of their own miracles and thoſe of others, produce ſuch arguments as would ſtagger the beſt wits of our party.

JULIAN.

How ridiculous did the Pagans of antiquity appear, when they compared the miracles of Apollonius Tyaneus with thoſe of the Galilean!

ROUSSEAU.

THE miracles of Apollonius cannot fall under the cenſure you have paſſed on mine. They were no chymical tricks: he cured the blind—he raiſed the dead——

So Philoſtratus, his hiſtorian, ſays. But who told him ſo? Severus's wife told him, he informs his reader; and ſhe lived about one hundred years after Apollonius was dead. Beſides, this writer's deſign is too thin to eſcape undetected: the miracles he aſcribes to his hero are evidently copied from thoſe of the Goſpel; ſo evident, that he has even * uſed the words of Luke. But if Philoſtratus was willing to ſupply the Pagan diſputants with a ſett of miracles as wonderful as thoſe of the Chriſtians, Apollonius's other hiſtorian, Mæragenes, who wrote long before Philoſtratus, had no ſuch deſign; for he makes his hero no more than a

* Biſhop Huet.

mere

mere Juggler, another Alexander of Pontus.

ROUSSEAU.

But if the miracle-workers of Pagan antiquity were no better than a ſett of gypſies, modern times can produce miracles of the moſt aſtoniſhing kind, and atteſted with all the authority of witneſſes, but which in the end only proved the inſufficiency of human evidence on the ſubject.

JULIAN.

Celsus, a few days ago, repeated with great pleaſure ſome ſentences, to this purpoſe, from a living Philoſopher; ſentences full of the moſt confident triumph over every pretence to miracle. You, Porphyry, was with him; but I was ſo deeply engaged in

a diſpute with the teſty Jerome, that I could not then attend to, nor partake of, your joy.

PORPHYRY.

You would have found little cauſe of joy:—you would have been amazed at the falſehood and impudence of theſe triumphant aſſertions.

JULIAN.

Be particular.

PORPHYRY.

They are from the ſame Philoſopher who ſo ingeniouſly ſuppoſes the reſurrection of queen Elizabeth: After having denied the poſſibility of miracles, he proceeds to ſome inſtances of pretended ones, wrought in the preſent age, in the midſt of Paris, and atteſted,

atteſted, he ſays, in the ſtrongeſt manner: ſo ſtrongly, that nothing but the utter impoſſibility of every miracle can invalidate their proof. "The "Jeſuits," he ſays, "a learned body, "ſupported by the civil magiſtrate, "and determined enemies to thoſe "opinions in whoſe favour the miracles "are ſaid to have been wrought, were "never able diſtinctly to refute or de-"tect them*."

VOLTAIRE.

A BOLD aſſertion!

PORPHYRY.

BUT even falſer than bold. Fraud and impoſture were in ſeveral, in many inſtances, fully and diſtinctly † de-

* H——'s Eſſay on Miracles.

† In the caſes of *Jaques Laurent Menedrieux*, *Jean Nivet*, *Laleu*, *Anne Coulon*, *Anne le Franc*, and many others.

 tected,

tected; and in ſome, even by the confeſſion of the parties * themſelves, who were ſaid to be cured by the Abbé de Paris,

JULIAN.

To vapour away that they were never refuted, is a kind of literary felony; and dares a modern Philoſopher thus to abuſe the publick whom he pretends to inſtruct!

PORPHYRY.

WITH the utmoſt inſult of triumph our Philoſopher † adviſes the Chriſtians, that "if they be wiſe, they had "better adopt the miracles of the "Abbé de Paris; as being more wor-"thy a thouſand times, than all the "reſt of their collection."

WHAT delirium is this!

* The *Sieur le Doulx*, the widow *de Lorme*, &c.

† Eſſay on Miracles.

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

ARE not you too vehement, good Porphyry? This acute Philoſopher merits no ſuch contempt as you would pour upon him.

PORPHYRY.

HAVE patience.—Elated with joy, Celſus and I heard his triumph over the pretences to miracle; and wiſhful to be convinced of the juſtice of it, we conſulted the Archbiſhop of *Sens* and *M. de Montgeron*, the two beſt maſters of the ſubject of the Abbé de Paris?—But alas! our joy was ſoon ſucceeded with indignation againſt the Bigot, who had deceived us with vain hope.

VOLTAIRE.

MR. H—— a Bigot!

PORPHYRY.

WHAT other excuſe can you leave him? Nothing but the enthuſiaſm of Bigotry could have betrayed him into ſuch glaring abſurdities. The Archbiſhop of *Sens* has proved that many of the Abbé's pretended miracles were fully detected and refuted; and *Montgeron*, the zealous devotee of the Abbé, in his eight inſtances of cures, has given the cleareſt proof that they cannot even bear a compariſon with the miracles recorded in the Evangile. In theſe the cure was inſtant; the Lame leapt, the Blind ſaw, and the Dead aroſe, inſtant as the flaſh of the lightning, at the word of the Galilean. In the deſpicable miracles of the Abbé de Paris, how different! *Montgeron*,

geron, his fanatic admirer, has told
that not only days, but weeks, 1
months intervened between the f
application and the relief receiv
Multitudes received no benefit ; a
thoſe who did, uſed medicines, a
the cure was imperfect. This *Mo*
geron fairly acknowledges : and
account of the facts has convinced r
that the cure of thoſe who did rece
a partial benefit at the Tomb of t
Saint, can be fairly accounted
by natural cauſes*.—Alas! how unw
thy of a Scholar and a Philoſopher
it even to mention the miracles of t
Abbé de Paris, in compariſon w
thoſe aſcribed to the Nazarene! A

* See a plain ſenſible treatiſe called the C
terion, or Miracles examined.

wl

what blindneſs of bigotry to prefer them to thoſe, or to think that ſuch preferenoe will eſcape its deſerved contempt!

JULIAN.

But how were our cauſe bettered, if the miracles of the Abbé were really as ſtrongly authenticated as this modern aſſures us they are.

PORPHYRY.

It were every thing for us. Here are miracles moſt ſtrongly authenticated; and yet all the world knows, that an order from the king of France, and a wall built round the tomb of the Saint, put a final cloſe to the impoſture; and our Philoſopher has given the hint, that had the *inferior* miracles of the

the Goſpel met ſo proper a check, the world would never more have heard of them.

JULIAN.

AMAZING indeed! Can we charge this Philoſopher with ignorance? Has he read?

PORPHYRY.

HE has.

JULIAN.

SUCH miſrepreſentation then muſt ſtand to a worſe account than that of ignorance. The bars and walls of priſons, and all the threatening decrees of Princes, ay, and the execution of their ſevereſt threats, could not impede the miracles of the Goſpel.—My ſoul trembles at the thought—I myſelf

ſelf, the maſter of the world, could not falſify the Predictions of the Galilean, could not rebuild the Temple of Jeruſalem *.

PORPHYRY.

ENOUGH—with what other weapons do you attack Chriſtianity?

VOLTAIRE.

WE have one with a million of edges; our Criticiſm; by which we expoſe any particular paſſage we pleaſe, of the Volume which the ſuperſtitious receive as the book of God.

* See Warburton's treatiſe on Julian's arts, where this event is proved by every criterion of hiſtorical certainty.

JULIAN.

A PRETTY device to blind the multitude! But the information, O Voltaire, which will give us joy, is to acquaint us of any argument againſt Chriſtianity that has Truth and true Philoſophy on its ſide. Common honeſty and candour will demand a fair trial to the books held ſacred; and to a fair trial their advocates have always triumphantly appealed. Porphyry did no good to our cauſe, when he challenged the antiquity of the book of Daniel.

VOLTAIRE.

BUT if Porphyry had proved that the moſt antient Hebrew ſtories were evidently fictions borrowed from the fables

fables of the Greeks, he would have done ſomething.

PORPHYRY.

Ah, had it been ſo!

VOLTAIRE.

A CERTAIN proof in one inſtance is a preſumption for the reſt. Thus the Hebrew hiſtorian who ſends his hero to conſult a Pythoneſs, (we have the very word in the text) a Prieſteſs of Apollo, gives a certain proof from whence he is ſpinning his fable; and from thence we conclude, that the other ſtories of Samſon, and the ſacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, were borrowed from the fables of Hercules and the daughter of Agamemnon.

PORPHYRY.

ALAS, Voltaire, your argument falls to the ground! There is no ſuch word as Pythoneſs in the Hebrew volume. Your joy on finding that word in the Vulgate or Septuagint has hurried you on, and you have given the Chriſtians a triumph over your malice.

VOLTAIRE.

BUT M. Freret * has done greatly: he levels the whole fabrick at once. The New Teſtament is all a forgery, he ſays, contrived about Conſtantine's time, never once mentioned by the firſt Chriſtian writers.

JULIAN.

AMAZING falſehood! — I myſelf have given teſtimony to ſome of its

* Secretary to the Society at Berlin.

books

books being written by the Apoſtles *; Its forgery in my Uncle's age had never eſcaped undetected by me, who muſt have been in the ſecret, from my connections with the leaders † of the Church. Long ere Conſtantine lived, it was a thouſand times cited, as the rule of Faith, by the earlieſt Fathers. I had lately a long diſcourſe with Lardner: § the authorities he has produced reflect diſgrace on Freret.

* St. John in particular.

† He had received Deacon's orders, and had been pupil to ſome of the moſt eminent Fathers of his age.

§ Beſides Lardner, Whitby, Jortin, Fillemont, Le Clerc, and Lipſienſis, have put this ſubject beyond all poſſibility of doubt, the latter of whom treats the arguments lately adopted by Freret as the moſt illiterate of all cavils.

PORPHYRY.

INDIGNATION fires me.—Our cauſe is ruined in the hands of blockheads. But what other arguments do you bring againſt Chriſtianity?

VOLTAIRE.

WE have a thouſand philoſophical arguments: the principal one, that the immortality it proudly boaſts to have brought to light is all a deluſion.

PORPHYRY.

IMMORTALITY is the wiſh of Nature; a wiſh that will always be dear to the virtuous boſom. It is the triumph of Nazaritiſm to drive its oppoñents to a ſyſtem againſt Virtue and Nature.

JULIAN.

But what proof do you offer for your favourite doctrine, the mortality of the mind?

VOLTAIRE.

Our modern Cæsar asserts, (and the great Shaftesbury said it before him) that as men did not think before they were born, they will therefore cease to think after death *

PORPHYRY.

Oh excellent! A creature cannot be immortal for this good reason, just

* De l'avenir, cher Keith, jougeons par la passé,
Comment avant que je fusse, il n'avoit point pensé,
De même après ma mort, quand toutes mes parties
Par la corruption seront anneanties,
Par un même destin il ne penserá plus.

Roi de Prusse.

because

becauſe he is a creature, becauſe he did not always exiſt. Shame on your modern Philoſophy! it begins with demanding demonſtration for every thing it is willing to oppoſe, and ends with ſupporting its own ſcheme with nothing better than a round aſſertion.

JULIAN.

YET immortality has all the proof that the limits of human knowledge can receive; to aſk actual demonſtration for it is to require organs which Nature has not beſtowed on men. You moderns have betrayed our cauſe.

VOLTAIRE.

AND Chriſtianity triumphs in the objections of antiquity. It was not adapted to human Nature, you ſaid, be-

cauſe it forbad revenge and whoredom. To be ſure, a Pythagorean, with his beans, were a fit perſon to refute the Moſaic account of the Creation!

PORPHYRY.

WHAT do you mean, Voltaire?

VOLTAIRE.

HAVE you forgot what you ſay in your Life of Pythagoras, that at the firſt formation of things men and beans ſprung up together? And you very gravely add, that take a little bit of bean-bloſſom when growing black, and bury it in the earth for ninety days, and then dig up the place, and you will find inſtead of the bloſſom either a child's head formed, or γυναικὸς αἰδοῖον. He that was capable of talking at this rate

ought

ought not to ridicule modern Philoſophy.

PORPHYRY.

DOES an abſurdity of mine render one of yours leſs ridiculous? The antients who attacked Chriſtianity, believed in the immortality of the ſoul. That doctrine is now wholly in the poſſeſſion of Chriſtianity: and have not you thus yielded the palm?

VOLTAIRE.

WELL; but what argument would moſt effectually refute Revelation?

PORPHYRY.

I CAN give you ſome deſcription of the argument that would do it. Chriſtianity addreſſes itſelf to the feelings, the fears, and wiſhes of the human

heart. Now when the world can produce a ſyſtem that will lay a ſtronger hold on theſe, that will give piety a ſublimer hope, that will give to vice greater fears, and to true penitence ſweeter conſolations * ; then, and then only, will Chriſtianity be rationally and effectually refuted. The propheey of Monteſquieu, that Chriſtianity would not ſtand its ground above other two hundred years, diffuſed joy through our manſions; but I now fear the completion will never take place. Either better arguments muſt be diſcovered, or, what indeed ſeems already to be far advanced, a want of honeſty in making enquiry, and a ſuperficial dabbling and trifling in Phi-

* Lord L——n's Dialogues of the Dead.

loſophy

loſophy muſt take entire poſſeſſion of the human mind: in either of theſe caſes, but in no other, the prophecy may be fulfilled. The latter would prove no alleviation to us; and of the former, alas! I greatly deſpair.

JULIAN.

Oh Porphyry, we have little comfort in what modern wit has been able to do for our cauſe. Farewel for a while, Voltaire; I ſuppoſe you will ſoon join our company. Lucian, whoſe Chriſtianity and wit were not unlike your own, longs to ſee you.

PORPHYRY.

Some further converſation with Rouſſeau is deſirable. Yonder approaches the ſoul of a celebrated

VOLTAIRE.

WHAT; is not the ſilly credulity and prejudices of the Fathers truly abſurd? Are not your own numerous complaints of the Devil's buſying himſelf to tempt you to the violation of your valuable chaſtity, truly ridiculous?

AUGUSTINE.

I HAD both my faults and my foibles. You tax me with prejudice; there is nothing indeed more unworthy of a Philoſopher; yet your modern ones are the very ſlaves of it. Voltaire himſelf was ſhackled and blinded with it. What but the moſt jaundice-eyed prejudice, on the comparative view of the Pagan and Chriſtian Philoſophers, could expreſs the higheſt

higheſt admiration of the one, and the deepeſt contempt of the other!

VOLTAIRE.

THE Fathers, indeed, juſtly excite our contempt; but I know no biaſs we have diſcovered againſt them.

AUGUSTINE.

YOU avow your contempt of them, and many others do the ſame, who know nothing about them. To deſpiſe them is the mode; and one fool echoes it to another. However, one of the fineſt ſcholars of modern times, the accompliſhed Eraſmus, was not blind to their merit. The liberal mind and fine genius of an Origen, the elegance of a Lactantius or a Baſil, and the amazing erudition of a Jerome, were not overlooked by him. But let

us

us enter on a compariſon between the Fathers and Philoſophers. Let us pitch on the Philoſopher and Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, a character which modern times talk of with the higheſt admiration.

VOLTAIRE.

To the honour of modern times be it remembered.

AUGUSTINE.

AURELIUS had a good heart, and his ſoul was formed for the love of virtue; but he had his weakneſſes; foibles, that had he diſtinguiſhed himſelf as a Chriſtian, would have furniſhed ſuch a fund of ridicule to the Lucians and Voltaires, that his character would have been one of the moſt contemptible on human record.

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

HA! how do you prove this?

AUGUSTINE.

IT only requires the wit of a Voltaire to do it. For example, to begin with his political conduct: What more unworthy of a ſupreme magiſtrate than that pedantry of benevolence with which he treated the firſt information of the revolt of Caſſius? Lucius Verus, his colleague in empire, gave him the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of it; but Aurelius was ſo good-natured, he would not believe a word of it; and thus by his ill timed humanity gave the villain Caſſius every opportunity to carry on his deſigns. He was proclaimed Emperor in the Eaſt, and to cruſh his rebellion coſt no more than the lives of

of ſome thouſands of the harmleſs ſubjects.

VOLTAIRE.

But what ſovereign ever equalled him as a Philoſopher?

AUGUSTINE.

I will by no means ſlip over his writings. His writings! might a Voltaire ſay: what are they? What is eaſier than to ſtring together a parcel of moral ſentences which the Stoics were taught to chyme over, and which before him had been thrummed over and over by Arianus and twenty more. As to his Philoſophy, what is it? He talks of the ſoul, and of God; but the one may be mortal for what he knew, and the other he fairly reckons material: and to this his Supreme, he added

an

an infinite fry of leſſer gods, to whoſe idols he was continually burning ſacrifice. On the *dies nefaſti*, when public ſacrifices were prohibited, every corner of his houſe ſmoked with inceniſe to his *lares* and *penates*. Nay, our admirable Philoſopher imagined he could make gods; and ſtrange ſort of ſtuff he choſe to make them of. L. Verus, his ſon-in-law and colleague in the empire, was one of the moſt profligate characters in the Pagan world. Even the diſſolute inhabitants of Daphne were aſtoniſhed at the revels of his lewdneſs. His wife's mother, the Empreſs Fauſtina, and his own ſiſter Fabia, were his whores; and poiſon adminiſtered by his ſpouſe Lucilla, our Philoſopher's daughter, put an end to his infamous life. Yet of this wretch

muſt the cuckold Antoninus make a god; and the Roman ſenate muſt aſſiſt at his Apotheoſis. Fauſtina, our Philoſopher's wife, the abandoned Fauſtina, whoſe adulteries were the jeſt of the Theatre, muſt alſo be a goddeſs; and the youths and the virgins of Rome muſt invoke her ſhrine at the celebration of the nuptial rite. How ridiculous, how contemptible are this man's ideas of the Object of divine worſhip! For me to call his piety mere Atheiſm, you might brand as the prejudice of a monk; but I truſt, a Philoſopher, of your own complexion will have ſome weight with you. * "The Pagan wor-
"ſhippers, ſays he, theſe pretended re-
"ligioniſts, are really a kind of ſuper-
"ſtitious Atheiſts, and acknowledge no

* H——'s Natural Hiſtory of Religion.

"being

" being that correſponds to our idea of a " Deity, (he ſhould have added, which we have been taught by Revelation) " no firſt principle of mind or thought." Nay he adds, " The religion of Mar- " cus Aurelius and Plutarch is not " worthy of the honourable denomi- " nation of Theiſm : the creed of theſe " Philoſophers may be juſtly ſaid to " exclude a Deity, and to leave only " angels and fairies." For ſhame! let us hear no more of the divine Aurelius.

VOLTAIRE.

HOWEVER he may have failed in the abſtruſer paths of metaphyſics, his equanimity and clemency were truly divine.

AUGUSTINE.

So groſs were his conceptions of the object of worſhip, they are a diſgrace to the name of Man. But this is the abſtruſe path of metaphyſics: Alas, what will not prejudice ſay! His equanimity was indeed admirable; and let him enjoy the praiſe of it. But had he perſecuted any ſect of Philoſophers as he perſecuted the Chriſtians, every babe would have been taught to liſp his name with deteſtation.

VOLTAIRE.

The Chriſtians were repreſented to him as guilty of the worſt crimes.

AUGUSTINE.

Very true. But theſe accuſations were fully anſwered by the apologies of

of Juſtin, of the Philoſopher Athenagoras, of the elegant Melito, and Apollinaris, who prayed and intreated him to be convinced by examination of the innocence of the Chriſtians. But he was convinced of their guilt in one particular: They reviled his rabble of gods; and to appeaſe theſe, the Empire from Aſia to Gaul ſmoaked with the blood of Chriſtians. I burn with indignation. I think I ſee the good old Polycarp, the moſt unblemiſhed character, the worſhipper of the Eternal Infinite Mind, accuſed of Atheiſm by the moſt groveling Atheiſts; and becauſe he will not worſhip and ſacrifice to the ſtatue of our philoſophical Emperor, condemned to the flames. Had he been an Indian Philoſopher who thus oppoſed the be-

ſotted ſuperſtition of an Alexander, how glorious would his name have been among men! But Polycarp was a Chriſtian; and Prejudice will allow him no honour.

VOLTAIRE.

Yet ſtill miſinformation may be pleaded in excuſe of the Emperor.

AUGUSTINE.

The Emperor himſelf eſteemed it as the greateſt diſgrace to a Philoſopher not to be duly informed; and he had every opportunity. But Creſcens the Philoſopher had his ear; Creſcens, a wretch addicted to the vileſt luſts; a wretch who trembled at the thoughts of Death, which as the greateſt evil he procured for Juſtin. Let us take a comparative view of Creſcens and Juſtin:

Juſtin: The one a ſlave to the vileſt luſts; the other of the moſt innocent life: The one a believer in the gods of Paganiſm, or an Atheiſt; the other the worſhipper of the Eternal Creator; The one ſhocked at the thought of death; the other eſteeming his martyrdom as the greateſt bliſs, and telling the Emperor that a Chriſtian could lay down his life with as much indifference as a Philoſopher could put off his coat: In ſhort, the one a moſt deſpicable, the other, with all his foibles that an invidious pen * has been able to collect, a moſt exalted character.

VOLTAIRE.

But Antoninus ſtopped the perſecution. It was never under his own

* Middleton.

eye. The blood of a martyr was not ſhed within the walls of Rome during his reign *.

AUGUSTINE.

So modern prejudice has ſaid; but it has the misfortune not to be true: † Valerianus, Peon, Hierax, Juſtin Martyr, and ſeveral more were beheaded in Rome by his order; their crime, Chriſtianity. Yet after all, Voltaire, I will confeſs to you that Aurelius was naturally of an amiable and merciful diſpoſition; it was the curſed effect of his abominable ſuperſtition, it was devotion to his diabolical gods that ever made him ſhed the blood of a Chriſtian. Your modern Philoſophers pretend to affect the utmoſt deteſtation of

* Aſſerted by the Daciers. † Cave.

ſuperſtition;

ſuperſtition; human record cannot afford ſuch an example of it, as is to be found in Marcus Aurelius. See him continually on his knees to his houſehold idols: See him on the banks of the Danube ready to join battle with the Marcomanni and Quadi, yet delaying till he fulfilled the ſtupid rites of ſuperſtition *; a couple of lions, with a parcel of herbs, flowers, and ſpices, muſt be thrown into the ſtream as a ſacrifice to the god of the river. But what was the ſequel? the flight of our Emperor, and twenty thouſand of his ſoldiers left dead on the field. On another time, when peſtilence raged in every

* Which were preſcribed by Alexander of Pontus, a miracle-monger, whoſe name is tranſmitted to poſterity, with deſerved infamy, by Lucian.

city, and the Barbarians were ready to ravage the empire, behold the contemptible ſuperſtition of Antoninus. Leſt ſome rites that were pleaſing to the gods ſhould be omitted, he brought prieſts and ſacrificers from all parts, with their whole trumpery of rites: The ceremonies of Iſis, which had been prohibited by Auguſtus, were re-eſtabliſhed; "and he made no ſcruple to adore a "goddeſs, that had her temple deſ-"troyed in the reign of Tiberius, "her ornaments burnt, her prieſts "murdered, and her image thrown "into the Tiber*." And ſo many were the victims ſlain on this occaſion, that even the heathens jeſted on him, and ſaid that if he returned victorious there would not be an ox left in the empire.

* Caſaubon.

Is

Is our Philoſopher, who had no better idea of invoking the Deity than by recourſe to every barbarous rite, leſt the beloved one ſhould be omitted; is he to be compared with thoſe who are taught that God is a Spirit, and muſt be worſhipped in Spirit and Truth? Let us hear a Plutarch curſing his gods, curſing the Divine Providence on the death of his ſon. Let us hear the meaneſt Chriſtian in the ſame affliction: He does not mourn as without hope; nay, ſoon as the pang of nature has ſubſided, joy takes place; for he believes, that bleſſed are the dead which die in their Redeemer. What more exalted idea of God and immortality can the human mind conceive, than is poſſeſſed by the Chriſtian? and what more deſpicable than the Atheiſm and baſe ſu-

perſtition

perſtition of the Philoſopher? Yet the modern Free-thinker views the Pagan not only with the greateſt tenderneſs, but with admiration; while the divine philoſophy of the Chriſtian entirely eſcapes his eye; and dwelling with triumph on the human weakneſſes that adhere to the characters of the Fathers, he conceives the utmoſt contempt of theſe venerable names; and thus, winking againſt the light, our pretended Free-thinker, our modern Philoſopher, becomes the verieſt dupe and ſlave of prejudice.

Often, Voltaire, have you been merry with my weakneſſes, and have called my piety ſuperſtition; and often have you called Antoninus divine. Had I ever been ſo blinded with prejudice as this, the thought of it even now would

ſink me down. You are ſilent. Let us look round us in this region of unjudged ſpirits. Yonder in keen debate are the manes of ſome Rabbins, ſome zealous Muſſulmans, and ſome Gentoos and Bramins.

VOLTAIRE.

QUARRELLING whoſe religion was the beſt, I ſuppoſe.

AUGUSTINE.

A CONSCIOUS triumph in your own ſuperiority ſparkles in your eyes, and your heart congratulates itſelf on the abſurdity of the different dogmas of Religion. Let us indulge your deſire, and go to join them.

VOLTAIRE.

A CHRISTIAN father with his pious frauds, his miracles and holy relicks, will complete the groupe.

AUGUSTINE.

WITH the addition of a modern Philoſopher.

VOLTAIRE.

IF I am not miſtaken, this is the ſhade of a modern Greek: Let me aſk him a few queſtions. What Religion did you profeſs, my friend?

GREEK.

WHEN * our little iſland of Samos belonged to the Greeks, I remember

* For this and the following ſee Voltaire's *Dictionaire Philoſophique.*

our

our prieſt ordered me to believe that *Agion pneuma* proceeded only from *Tou patrou.* When the Venetians took poſſeſſion of our iſle, our new Italian curate ordered me to ſay, that *Agion pneuma* proceeded both from *Tou patrou* and *Tou you.* And when the Turks came, we were ordered to cry out as loud as we could, *Allah illa Allah.* For my part, I knew not at laſt what Religion I was of; but I loved God with all my heart, and ſold my goods very reaſonably.

VOLTAIRE.

And here comes an Arabian: Let me aſk him a queſtion. What profeſſion did you follow, my good friend?

ARA-

ARABIAN.

I TAUGHT Arithmetic, Calculation, and Aſtronomy.

VOLTAIRE.

AND you were a good Muſſulman, I ſuppoſe?

ARABIAN.

I WAS.

VOLTAIRE.

AND though you were a good calculator, you nevertheleſs believed that Mohammed put one-half of the moon in his coat-ſleeve.

ARABIAN.

WHAT, do you even ſuſpect I was an Infidel!

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

No, no: I am very well pleaſed you ſhould have all the faith of Abubeker. But hark ye, Auguſtine, does not this remind you of that bleſſed orthodox maxim, *Credo, quia impoſſibile eſt.*

AUGUSTINE.

YONDER Jewiſh Rabbin will anſwer you a queſtion, or two: Do, try him, Voltaire.

VOLTAIRE.

WELL, my good Rabbin, indulge me with an anſwer about Adam's fall. Adam fell, you ſay: Come, Eleazar, how did that happen?

RABBIN.

HAVE you never read the holy Targums and Talmuds? The Pentateuch is darkneſs, compared to them.

VOLTAIRE.

WELL, but how did Adam fall?

RABBIN.

* GOD made him exceeding glorious and great, ſo lofty that he could reach his hand to the moon; and he had a majeſtic tail, ſo long that he could ſwing it from the river Euphrates to the weſt of Europe. And God ſaid in the ninety-ſeventh pſalm, "Worſhip him, "all ye angels." Michael and Gabriel

* For this Talmudical Legend, ſee Pere Calmet.

did

did ſo; but Sammael being terrified at the length of his tail, refuſed to do it; wherefore he and his angels were driven out of heaven.

VOLTAIRE.

I DID not enquire how the Devil fell.

RABBIN.

HEAR me out. Michael himſelf was terrified at the ſwinging of Adam's tail, and humbly begged God to cut it off, which he did; and Adam being ſpoiled of his ornament, and put to great pain, blaſphemed his Maker, and therefore was driven out of Paradiſe; at which time God put his hand on him, and reduced him to ſix foot ſtature. Then Adam made the Thirty-

eighth Pſalm, and ſaid, "Thy hand "preſſeth me ſore."

VOLTAIRE.

O PRECIOUS Theology! But hark, how warmly theſe Gentoos and Brathins are arguing about the nine incarnations of the god Viſtnou. Come, confeſs, my good Saint, you have now had time enough to ſee the folly and cheat of religious legends; they are all of a piece; it is only education and habit that makes one appear leſs ridiculous than another; come, confeſs, my good Father.

AUGUSTINE.

THIS, Voltaire, is the great argument that runs through all your writings.

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

But confeſs, I ſay.

AUGUSTINE.

FIRST let us hear yonder ſhade giving a lecture on the Newtonian Philoſophy. He is juſt explaining Gravitation, and how by its force the planetary dance is ſupported, every planet a world, and every ſtar a ſun, ſurrounded with his planets.

VOLTAIRE.

Now am I in heaven! O Newton, thou wert the prophet of Divine Nature!

AUGUSTINE.

LET us alſo hear yonder Muſſulman on the ſame ſubject. The world is ſupported on a great red bull's horns, he tells his audience. One of them aſks him, What ſupports the bull? A great ſtone. And what ſupports the ſtone? Another great red bull. And what ſupports that bull? You are an impertinent fellow, ſays the Muſſulman; and turning to others, he begins to deſcribe the heavens. The firſt heaven is made of ſteel, ſays he, and the ſtars are pieces of cryſtal, that hang in golden chains from it; and here is a great rock, an hundred times bigger than mount Sinai. The next heaven is made of ſilver.—But enough of his nonſenſe. Let us hear this Chineſe,

and

and this Indian Philoſopher. The world is not at all round, ſays the Chineſe, as the one-ey'd * Europeans fooliſhly imagine; it is an immenſe plain, and China is placed in the middle of it.—And it ſtands on the back of a Tortoiſe, ſays the Indian. In ſhort, Voltaire, we might walk for a month in theſe regions, where the ſouls which have not been judged ſtill retain their former opinions, and ſtill might we hear ſome new abſurdity on cosmography, and the ſyſtem of the univerſe. Now confeſs, my Philoſopher, you have now ſeen the folly and cheat of philoſophical legends; they are all of a piece, all nonſenſe; it is only ha-

* The Chineſe have a proverb, that themſelves have two eyes, the Europeans one, and all the reſt of the world are blind.

bit that makes one appear leſs ridiculous than another.

VOLTAIRE.

By no means.—Does the ſtory of the red bull's horns ſupporting the world diſprove the ſyſtem of gravitation?

AUGUSTINE.

Most undoubtedly it does.—Becauſe there are a thouſand abſurdities about the queſtion, all muſt be alike.

VOLTAIRE.

By no means.

AUGUSTINE.

Indeed! and yet this is the grand argument you have uſed againſt Chriſtianity. Have not your writings in a thouſand

thouſand inſtances repreſented the abſurdities of various Religions, as a full proof of the abſurdity of all? And why muſt not the ſame reaſoning be applied to the Newtonian philoſophy? Abſurd indeed is ſuch reaſoning, and when thus brought to the teſt, you yourſelf are aſhamed of it.

VOLTAIRE.

But the Newtonian Philoſophy ſtands upon demonſtration: I hope you don't think your Religion does.

AUGUSTINE.

I DO think it does, and on a much more certain and extenſive one. Does deſign imply intelligence? and is there difference between good and evil? I aſk no other data.

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

But ſome philoſophers have denied both theſe data.

AUGUSTINE.

We have a Bedlam in the land of ſpirits for theſe geniuſes. Your Philoſophers may talk of the want of proof till their lungs fail them; but there is an internal feeling in the breaſt of every thinking man, that in ſpight of his will commands him to aſſent to the truth of theſe data. The cauſe of Religion is indebted to a Philoſopher of your own, for enforcing this argument *. And another of your own Philoſophers, a moſt indubitable witneſs on that ſubject, has aſſured us,

* Lord K——s.

that

that " The moſt open impiety is at-
" tended with a ſecret dread and com-
" punction *."

VOLTAIRE.

BUT how is yours comparable to the Newtonian demonſtration?

AUGUSTINE.

THERE is an argument againſt the fundamental datum of Newton, infinitely more ſubtile than what has been advanced againſt the difference of good and evil. What will become of the Newtonian philoſophy, if the reality of motion is diſproved? and you know what † Zeno had to ſay on that head. Nor

* H———'s Natural Hiſtory of Religion.

† See Diog. Laert. in vit. Pyrrh. Ed. Caſ. p. 694. Αλλα μην ουδε κινησις εστι· κ. τ. λ. In Engliſh thus. " Neither is there motion; for the thing have

have I heard that Zeno's argument has been mathematically refuted.

VOLTAIRE.

Common ſenſe refutes it.

AUGUSTINE.

I am glad of that. So all your boaſted Newtonian demonſtration ends in an appeal to common ſenſe; and common ſenſe is very certain that deſign implies intelligence, and that there is a difference between good and evil. The creation implies deſign; that deſign infinite wiſdom and omnipotence; theſe imply infinite goodneſs and juſ-

moved is either moved in the place in which it is, or in which it is not; but in the place in which it is, it is not moved, nor can it be moved in the place in which it is not: therefore there is no motion."

tice;

tice; this, including the difference between good and evil, implies the doctrine of full retribution of rewards and punishments to moral agents.

VOLTAIRE.

THIS is no more than Natural Religion.

AUGUSTINE.

YOU miſtake. 'Tis Revelation. 'Tis demonſtrable that human reaſon never diſcovered that only baſis of Religion, the idea of an Infinite Mind *, or dreamed of ſeveral of the duties of morality.

VOLTAIRE.

YOUR argument reaches but to one half of your Religion.

* Fully proved by Campbell.

A U-

AUGUSTINE.

I UNDERSTAND you: You want proof of thoſe parts which are not reducible to Natural Religion.

VOLTAIRE.

I DO.

AUGUSTINE.

WELL, let us view that part of Revelation called Natural Religion by itſelf. Its miſerable deficiency demonſtrates the neceſſity of ſome more: It falls far ſhort of the wiſhes and anxieties of the human heart; it only faintly gueſſes, but gives no aſſurance of pardon to repenting guilt. A faint gueſs will never ſatisfy human anxiety; and an indifference fatal to morality will

enſue.

enſue. Here then is demonſtration that Chriſtianity is founded on the wants of human nature, and on the intereſt of morality. For other parts of it we have demonſtration, though not mathematical, yet equally credible.—I deny there was ever ſuch a man as Julius Cæſar; all about him is mere fiction.

VOLTAIRE.

What now! amazing!

AUGUSTINE.

Come to argument; how do you prove there was ſuch a man?

VOLTAIRE.

By the Roman Hiſtory, and the conſent of mankind.

A U-

AUGUSTINE.

A FEW hiſtorians, who contradict one another at every turn, talk of ſuch a man. The two or three original volumes that mention him, for many hundreds of years lay unknown in monaſteries, where perhaps they were originally manufactured*. At laſt they were found; and a few people in Europe peruſed them; and as theſe had no inclination to doubt, they believed that a man called Julius Cæſar had lived. Now let us ſuppoſe that the preaching of Chriſt and his Apoſtles is denied.

* This is ſeriouſly maintained by Pere Harduin.

VOLTAIRE.

Let us ſuppoſe it.

AUGUSTINE.

Did you ever ſee a church?——Is not Europe covered with them? And is not the Turkiſh Empire covered with the ruins of them? Does not Chriſtianity exiſt? Are there not millions of Chriſtians ſcattered through the Eaſt? What is the inference?

VOLTAIRE.

That there was ſome reaſon for building theſe churches.

AUGUSTINE.

Let us trace this reaſon from century to century; and to do this we have the help of innumerable volumes; the

the hiſtory and the laws of every country mark out its progreſs; for every age, and every nation known to that age, afford us documents, till we trace it up to the Roman Laws and the Roman hiſtory itſelf: From all which we will find, that theſe churches were built in conſequence of the preaching of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. The reality of this fact being eſtabliſhed, every thing elſe will follow which the Chriſtian can deſire. And to the proofs of this fact, how inferior, even nothing in compariſon, is the proof that Cæſar lived!—and yet even to doubt That is a ſin againſt common ſenſe. I muſt ſoon leave you, Voltaire; ere I depart, tell me what advantage

vantage does your ſceptical philoſophy propoſe.

VOLTAIRE.

It gives the greateſt pleaſure in argument. He that argues for Religion, is like a perſon cooped up in a fortreſs which he himſelf did not plan, and many of whoſe walls are weak and ruinous; and if a breach is once made, his cauſe is loſt. On the other hand, the ſceptic is like the aſſailant: he chuſes his ground in the open field; and though battery after battery is demoliſhed, it is nothing to him, he can raiſe others elſewhere; and though again diſpoſſeſſed, he is ſtill unconquered, he can ſtill raiſe more *.

* See H——'s eulogy on the Author of a treatiſe on the Populouſneſs of Ancient Nations.

AUGUSTINE.

To carry on the alluſion, let us ſuppoſe the country people around are ruined by our aſſailant's building ſo many batteries every where on their grounds.

VOLTAIRE.

In that caſe he is a conſummate raſcal.

AUGUSTINE.

And what better is your ſceptical Philoſopher, who for his amuſement unnerves the obligation of every virtue, laughs at piety, and confounds the difference between good and evil, between vice and virtue, and thus unhinges every bond of ſociety? When youth is lively and warm, and the judg-

judgment uninformed, ſcepticiſm flatters every wiſh of debauchery. Without being maſter of one ſyllable of the argument, how many thouſands are the proſelytes of Infidelity! The authority of a Voltaire, a Rouſſeau, or a H——, is enough for them; and thus bigotry and profligacy go hand in hand: and often, when Death approaches, the cowardice of guilt and a tranſition to the moſt abject ſuperſtition complete the deteſtable character. Such, Voltaire, are your diſciples! May the deſigns of your heart, at the awful bar, be found innocent! I retire.—The ſhade of a celebrated modern approaches you.

[*Ex.* Auguſtine.

Enter STERNE *and* ROUSSEAU.

ROUSSEAU.

SINCE I retired with Porphyry and Julian, I have had a converſation with the Engliſh Rabelais, who comes with me, deſirous to ſee Voltaire—

STERNE.

AND to congratulate him on his arrival in the region of ſpirits.

VOLTAIRE.

MOST excellent Shandy, your preſence exhilarates me!—I have juſt now been harraſſed and teazed by an old monk, who dared to call the *Eſprits forts* of modern times the verieſt ſlaves of bigotry and prejudice.

STERNE.

STERNE.

ROUSSEAU has informed me of your converſation with thoſe noble *Eſprits forts* of antiquity, Porphyry and Julian; but I am ſurpriſed, that in enumerating the arts and the arguments with which the moderns attack Chriſtianity, ſome principal ones ſhould have been omitted by ſo great a maſter of the ſubject as Voltaire.

VOLTAIRE.

THERE was a peeviſhneſs about them which diſtreſſed me. But tell me, my Fellow-Philoſopher, what capital arguments have eſcaped me?

STERNE.

MANY: For example, modern * philoſophy ſays virtue and vice are merely

* See H——'s eſſays paſſim.

 artifi-

artificial; what is vice in one age and country, is virtue in another, the difference lying entirely in habit of thinking: And further, the ſpirit of ſcepticiſm is ſtrengthened by philoſophical proof, that there is no relation between cauſe and effect; that there is no ſuch thing as body or colour *; 'tis all an impreſſion on the imagination; in ſhort, that men have no proof of their own exiſtence.

ROUSSEAU.

By this Philoſophy it is impoſſible for men to find a demonſtrative proof of any thing; whence then do they find a proof that there is no proof †?

* Colour and beauty, according to ſtrict philoſophical truth, have no exiſtence but in the mind of the percipient; yet to us theſe appear to be qualities of external objects. *Lord K--s.*

† And accordingly Pyrrho and his followers have

VOLTAIRE.

My ingenious Sterne, I am not ignorant of this Philoſophy; but *entre nous* I will confeſs to you, that I was aſhamed to mention it to Porphyry and Julian. The old vulgar way of thinking, called common ſenſe, ſeemed to have ſuch poſſeſſion of them, that I muſt have ſtood their laughter a long while, ere I could have brought them to admire the modern refinements on Pyrrhoniſm. Beſides, Porphyry would have told me, that as the whole drift of this Philoſophy was to prove the impoſſibility of proof, we need only to turn its artillery on itſelf, and the

have ſyllogized to ſhew that demonſtration is impoſſible. See his Life in Diog. Laert. Caſaub. Edit. p. 688.

whole fabrick will fall to pieces, like a ſchoolboy's caſtle of cards *.

ROUSSEAU.

I NEVER had patience to hear theſe ravings of Philoſophy: The old nonſenſe of the Sophiſts, that a thing, at the ſame time, might be both true and falſe, is not more ridiculous.

VOLTAIRE.

A FINE compliment truly to the preſent age! which ſo much admires this Philoſophy, and the ingenuity of its great champion.

ROUSSEAU.

THAT Philoſopher often talks through his ſleep. Ere now his talk in

* This was confeſſed by the Pyrrhoniſts of antiquity. See the ſame Edit. p. 680.

his

his dreams has woefully alarmed me *. Even aſleep his voice is ominous.—Though an unembodied ſpirit, I tremble for my exiſtence; for, according to him, what perception is other than deluſion? But a ray from heaven, a ſentence from the ſon of Sirach, reſtores me; "What is fear but a betraying of the ſuccours which reaſon offers." And reaſon clearly tells us, that the hypotheſis which denies the teſtimony of the ſenſes, and the difference of colours, referring all to the imagination, is the moſt impoſſible miracle. From what agency does the perception ariſe?

* See Rouſſeau's letters on his quarrel with H---e, where he ſeriouſly tells the public, how that gentleman's talking through his ſleep alarmed and terrified him.

What

ſophy, that delirium of ſcepticiſm, which confeſſes the impreſſion, and yet denies the reality of the cauſe; a cauſe uniform in all ages, and among all the millions of mankind. And on this Philoſophy muſt we build a ſtructure of infidelity! Alas! what more like the fooliſh builder who founded his houſe on the ſand; but the rain beat upon it, the wind blew, and it tumbled in ruins!

VOLTAIRE.

When a comet appears, the natives of Malabar think that the Author of Nature has ſent it on purpoſe to prognoſticate the death of their worthleſs Nabob: The good people of Conſtantinople

tinople imagine its only errand is to announce ſome diſaſter to their city: The honeſt inhabitants of the Swiſs Cantons fancy, it has no other buſineſs than to portend ſome calamity to the Burghers of Berne; while the Chactaws of North America as wiſely conclude, that it foretels the death of their Sachem, or a war with their neighbours the Catawas. Nor are the ſagacious Engliſh——

STERNE.

But what is the inference of all this?

VOLTAIRE.

A very plain one. You ſaid I had omitted ſome of the arguments againſt Chriſtianity; and I have juſt now thought of one.

STERNE.

STERNE.

WELL, what is it?

VOLTAIRE.

How diſtant from vulgar ſtupidity and narrowneſs is the Philoſopher's doctrine of Comets! nor are the religious creeds of the vulgar and of the Philoſopher leſs different. The herd of every country think the little circle around them, employs the great attention of Providence, and that worlds muſt blaze in the ſky to influence their inſignificant affairs: In like manner they conſider the Almighty as buſying himſelf from all eternity about their worthleſs ſouls. How different

the

the views of the Philoſopher! What an infinity of worlds in his eye be-ſtar the boundleſs realms of ſpace; and how unworthy of Almighty Nature is that partial, trifling, care of man, which the vulgar attribute to their God!

STERNE.

I AM afraid your Philoſopher does not reſt here, but is apt to be too humble.

ROUSSEAU.

THERE is little danger of that; Humility was never a virtue among Philoſophers.

STERNE.

STERNE.

He is ſurely too humble who thinks himſelf unworthy of the care of Heaven.

VOLTAIRE.

Man is not neglected by Nature. How amply has ſhe ſtored the world with neceſſaries and luxuries! how laviſh her bounty! When the gay butterfly has ſipt of every flower, and has fluttered through his ſummer, he lays himſelf down in an endleſs winter of reſt. That it ſhould not be always youth and ſummer, how ungenerous the complaint!

ROUSSEAU.

I now underſtand you. Your Philoſopher, loſt in contemplation of the amazing,

amazing, perhaps infinite, variety of the objects of Nature's care, eſteems human life the all of man.

VOLTAIRE.

And not unreaſonably. The vulgar notion of heaven is extremely like the vulgar opinion of comets.

ROUSSEAU.

The vulgar notions are, indeed, highly abſurd; yet the higheſt idea I can form of the Deity, does not exclude his care for the race of men.

VOLTAIRE.

Enjoy your idea with all my heart: For my part, I cannot conceive that Almighty Nature, which has infinite worlds to govern, is ſo partially fond of the earthen animal man, as to

raiſe him to a being of next rank to Divinity.

STERNE.

By the term Almighty Nature, your Philoſophers often ſlip into the idea of pervading a mere plaſtic cauſe, a Spinozan God; and bewildered in the idea of its greatneſs, the mind learns to contemn the hopes of Religion. This confuſion of their enlarged idea, I believe, has produced many a thouſand *Eſprits forts*.

ROUSSEAU.

Alas, how unphiloſophical! Is it only oceans and mountains that announce the greatneſs of the Author of Nature! The meaneſt blade that vegetates, the ſmalleſt inſect that crawls,

crawls, in its amazing complication of fibres, beſpeaks his power and grandeur. And ſhall ſuch aſtoniſhing profuſion of deſign be diſcovered in the formation of the moſt worthleſs animal, and ſhall the meaneſt agent of the moral world be thought unworthy of his care? A ſuppoſition how unworthy of an Intelligent Cauſe! In the brute creation Nature has provided an adequate ſupply to every want; every appetite has its object at hand; and you can name no purpoſe of their creation which is unanſwered by the appointment of Nature. With man how different? Prone to vice, and ſurrounded with temptation, his life is a ſtruggle of moral agency; and that ſoul which can feel that there is ſomething baſe in vice, and ſomething

noble in virtue; that ſoul, amidſt all its failings, diſcovers a tendency to moral perfection; a tendency that can never ripen into perfection in human life. Here then is ſomething incomplete: And ſo far from thinking it unworthy of the attention of the Almighty to give a completion to the tendency of the human mind, that were the blind earthworm, a moral agent, I would pronounce it worthy of Omnipotence to raiſe it from ſtage to ſtage to angelick perfection. Experiment has proved that every plant is contained perfect in the ſeed. The acorn contains the future oak in all its branching pride; and ſhall Nature raiſe it from that diminutive ſtate till its branches mingle with the clouds, and ſhall the angel in the man be eſteemed

teemed unworthy of her perfecting care? Hearken to the voice of Nature; analogy, the ſureſt interpreter of Philoſophy, pronounces it impoſſible.

VOLTAIRE.

Now ſermon is over, let me aſk Sterne, what other arguments againſt Chriſtianity have I omitted? Should he mention a good one, it would give me more pleaſure than all that Metaphyſics have to ſay of analogy.

STERNE.

You have omitted a very ſucceſsful one. What could be more effectual than to prove that Natural Religion and Chriſtianity are at irreconcileable variance?

ROUSSEAU.

THIS were every thing. Woolaſton has aſſerted, and indeed it is a moſt certain concluſion, that no doctrine can be of divine Revelation which contradicts thoſe clear and certain principles of Natural Religion, which the Almighty has written on the human heart.

STERNE.

NATURAL Religion conſiſts in the belief of a God, and the ſoul's immortality; without theſe, particularly the laſt, it has no exiſtence; for in that caſe honeſty has no obligation but convenience; and vice is often extremely convenient to the attainment of worldly good, while many virtues have often the

contrary

contrary effect. Now if we can prove that this pretended Revelation teaches the natural mortality of the ſoul, we have ſet it ſufficiently at variance with Natural Religion. And this concluſive advantage we have already gained, and even by the aſſiſtance of ſome of the clergy, who very gravely call themſelves *rational Chriſtians*.

VOLTAIRE.

You agreeably ſurprize me.—I did not know this argument had gained much ground.

STERNE.

It has gained mightily. Socinus firſt diſcovered it; but in the preſent age, a reverend Archdeacon, a very rational Chriſtian, tells us, that the

mortality of the ſoul is almoſt demonſtrated.

VOLTAIRE.

To be the doctrine of Chriſtianity, I ſuppoſe.

STERNE.

UNDOUBTEDLY. Had you mentioned this to Porphyry and Julian, it muſt have given them great pleaſure. Natural Religion muſt now diſclaim Chriſtianity, as no daughter of hers.

VOLTAIRE.

You much miſtake Porphyry and Julian; they would have told me with indignation, that they deſired to know what philoſophical arguments had been diſcovered againſt Chriſtianity; and not what jumble of opinions had miſ-

misrepresented it. Perhaps, indeed, they might have wondered what induced the clergy to maintain a doctrine so disgraceful to their cause.

STERNE.

'Tis honourable to their cause, they tell us, and gives importance to the revealed doctrine of a Resurrection.

VOLTAIRE.

An honourable importance indeed! would Porphyry reply. If the soul is extinct at Death, a Resurrection is in the strictest sense a new creation. And what detestable idea does this give of the Supreme, to create a being, and impress on his mind a delusive belief of former existence, and then punish

or reward him according to that impreſſion?

STERNE.

But the ſoul-ſleeper would ſay, that it was no new creation; that the ſoul was a quality which remained in a ſtate of dormancy.

VOLTAIRE.

And Porphyry would have ſaid, this is moſt egregious nonſenſe. If the mind is only a quality reſulting from organization, there can be no identity of mental being; for the conſtituent parts of theſe organs are not two hours together identically the ſame; and therefore what reſults from them can have no continued identity, without which the

the doctrine of rewards and punishments is a mere burlesque on the Deity. Besides, what idea have you of the resulting quality of a dead body? To say such unimaginable quality is capable of being endowed with consciousness, is as absurd as to say there is a tune in the ashes of an organ, which is capable of being identically revived.

STERNE.

But this is appealing to Philosophy, which the soul-sleeper says, has nothing to do with a matter of Revelation. Now, could we wish for happier concessions? All the absurdities you have mentioned as consequent of the soul's mortality, only tend to disgrace that Revelation which

which teaches it. Could we wiſh for more?

VOLTAIRE.

Wish for more! Porphyry would have told me with diſdain that this was all impertinence; that the mortality of the ſoul, the happy contradiction to Natural Religion which you boaſt of, is no doctrine of the New Teſtament, which contains many expreſs declarations, and many certain and clear inferences of the contrary; that however many proſelytes theſe miſrepreſentations may bring over to the cauſe of infidelity, this is not defeating Chriſtianity by proof and argument, which is the only information that could give pleaſure to the anxious minds of Porphyry and Julian.

STERNE.

STERNE.

AND with that information they might have been gratified. Has not a Scottiſh * Philoſopher proved that the free agency of the mind is all a jeſt, and the feeling which men miſtake for it a meer deluſion; in ſhort, that every thing, from the ſhaking of a child's rattle to the fall of an empire, are by ſuch an abſolute neceſſity as could not even admit the poſſibility of happening otherwiſe? Happy Philoſopher, who thus could trace the motives of the mind, and ſo accurately diſcover their ſource, how applicable is thy motto!

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoſcere cauſas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, ſtrepitumque Acherontis avari!

* Lord K—s.

One

One objection indeed lies againſt his ſyſtem, that it makes God the author of ſin; but the rapture that inſpired him on the review of his glorious labours, now alſo kindles my boſom, and puts his words in my mouth: "What mortals term ſin, God pro-"nounces to be only error; for mo-"ral evil vaniſhes, in ſome meaſure, "from before his more perfect ſight; "and as at the beginning of days he "ſaw, ſo now he ſees and pronounces "ſtill that every thing is good."

VOLTAIRE.

GLORIOUS indeed! A deep inſight into human motive will prove an abſolute neceſſity, and therefore what men call ſin; God accounts only error; all is good, and Chriſtianity, as uſeleſs, is at laſt

laſt philoſophically defeated. My ingenious Triſtram, let us congratulate one another.

STERNE.

Not quite ſo faſt, Voltaire. I have mentioned three methods of attacking Chriſtianity. Two of them appeared deſpicable even to yourſelf; it now remains for me to expoſe the futility of the third. The Scotchman has indeed new trimmed the old ſyſtem of Democritus and Anthony Collins, and has talked about the inveſtigation of motives; but he has confounded phyſical and moral neceſſity; and from the want of ſuch a liberty as even the Almighty himſelf cannot enjoy, the liberty of doing a thing, and yet not doing it at the ſame inſtant, has wiſely con-

concluded there is no ſuch thing as liberty of volition at all.

VOLTAIRE.

Are you doing his argument juſtice?

STERNE.

Yes, ſtrictly. Does not he himſelf ſtate the caſe of chuſing between two objects where the neceſſity evidently reſts on this point, that of two objects one cannot chuſe both, and yet refuſe one? I have juſt now thought of an excellent argument to prove that a horſe cannot walk.

VOLTAIRE.

Ha—What is it?

STERNE.

Why, becauſe a horſe cannot fly. My proof is exactly of a kind with our phi-

Philoſopher's one againſt the liberty of volition; an argument which makes even God himſelf a ſurd Being, and ſtrips him of his primary agency, by making him ſubject to a ſuperior cauſe.

ROUSSEAU.

But our author profeſſes to look up to God with reverence and awe, as the fountain from which the whole ſyſtem of neceſſity flows.

STERNE.

He may profeſs what he will: But either God enjoys perfect liberty, or he does not. If he enjoys perfect liberty, the impoſſibility of doing and yet not doing a thing, is no proof againſt the reality of liberty. But if God the firſt cauſe does not enjoy li-

berty, there is a cauſe prior and ſuperior to the firſt Cauſe.

The human heart, though in the midſt of the deepeſt miſery, ſtill conſtitutionally pants after happineſs; which is a ſtrong philoſophical preſumption that the Author of Nature has alſo appointed ſome attainable relief, adequate to this natural impulſe: But this relief can never ariſe from the ſyſtem of neceſſity. Tell a wretch in the extremes of pain, that his torment is neceſſary, his mind will immediately enquire, Why? And if you can give no better reaſon than that it was abſolutely, fatally, or, what is the ſame, unconditionally predeſtinated, what horror, deſpair, and deteſtation, muſt overwhelm him, when he turns his eyes on his God. Frenzy and blaſphemy,

in

in his caſe, were magnanimity and honeſt indignation; and ſelf-murder his beſt, his only refuge. Again muſt I admire the propriety of our Philoſopher's motto, and how applicable to his ſyſtem may it be thus paraphraſed:

"HAPPY is he who can trace the "cauſes of things up to a fatal and ab- "ſolute neceſſity. He tramples under "his feet every terror, and the fear of "death, and is a match for inexor- "able fate; for when things are at the "worſt,—he can hang himſelf."

VOLTAIRE.

BUT why ſhould Philoſophers be ſo earneſt to account for the origin of evil, when it ſcarcely may be ſaid to exiſt. Moral evil, ſays our Philoſopher, vaniſhes from the more perfect ſight of God, who, as at the begin-

ning of days he ſaw, ſo now he ſees, and pronounces ſtill, "that every "thing is good."

ROUSSEAU.

YES, and he ſays too—"As ſpots "in the ſun's bright orb, ſo, in the "univerſal plan, ſcattered evils are "loſt in the blaze of ſuperabundant "goodneſs."

STERNE.

So, to carry on the alluſion, there are no evils to be ſeen by the naked eye; we muſt have a teleſcope to view them.—Hem!—this will never do.—I'll tell you an anecdote. Our poet Cowley valued himſelf not a little on the virtue of contentment, and wondered how people could be otherwiſe; but he forgot that every body

body had not five hundred a year with himſelf. So ſome of our Philoſophers from their elbow-chairs, amidſt all the elegancies of life, very gravely pronounce the earth to be a mighty agreeable ſort of a place, and for their heart and blood cannot find out the evil which ſome folks talk ſo much about.

ROUSSEAU.

A POOR compliment to the goodneſs of their hearts, which ſeem ſo little affected by the groans of miſery, which are every where on earth to be heard.

STERNE.

To be ſerious.—There is one evil, which, were there no other, would

render the preſent ſyſtem of humanity moſt imperfect and moſt unhappy; an evil the moſt deeply felt by the moſt amiable minds—I mean, Death.

VOLTAIRE.

WHAT, are the moſt amiable minds the moſt ſelfiſh and cowardly?

STERNE.

EVERY thing different. He who never can think of his own death without a ſecret joy, will the moſt bitterly feel, when the dear companion of his life, the friend of his boſom, drops into the grave. How dreadful to friendſhip are the devaſtations of Death! How imperfect

muſt

muſt it feel that ſyſtem, which is liable to ſo terrible an evil!

VOLTAIRE.

BUT a reaſon may be given for the admiſſion of death without impeaching the goodneſs of God. A reverend Archbiſhop * has done this. The happineſs of his creatures, ſays he, was God's motive in creation. Now young people have much more happineſs in life than the old; therefore for the increaſe of happineſs it is very proper that the old ſhould die, and make room for the young; and therefore Death is not a natural evil.

STERNE.

A SNEER at a Parſon ſtill pleaſes you.

* King, Archbiſhop of Dublin.

VOLTAIRE.

'Tis true, a fooliſh argument only betrays a cauſe. I juſt mentioned the Archbiſhop's for want of a better.

ROUSSEAU.

An Engliſh Philoſopher has perhaps afforded a better one. Thoſe evils which men are liable to, may conduce to the happineſs of other Beings, inviſible and ſuperior to them.

STERNE.

O Philosophy, how often haſt thou been dreſſed out in the fool's coat. Come, lay hold on thy rattle and bells, while I preſent you a ſcene of human miſery.

VOLTAIRE.

WHY, Sterne, will you be ſtage, ſcene, and actors, all in one?

STERNE.

YES, for a little while. Suppoſe now here ſtands Philoſophy with a fool's cap, rattle, and bells; and here comes a poor man carried on a litter. By a fall from a houſe-top, where by hard labour he was earning his family's ſuſtenance, both his thighs are broken, and his back disjointed. See, his wife and ſix or ſeven children, who depended for daily bread on his daily labour, ſee them ſhrieking and fainting around him, while he is awaken'd from a ſwoon by the additional agony of the proſpect of wanting food, and already

already he thinks he hears his children crying for bread. Philoſophy now ſteps forth, and ſhaking her rattle, "Halloo "you, ſays ſhe, be content, I tell you; "'tis for the good of the whole that "your bones ſhould be thus pounded "and ſmaſhed." The poor man is too much abſorbed in miſery to regard her; but one of the ſpectators ſteps forward, and with an arch look, "For the good "of the whole! ſays he: Why the "Doctor will never get a farthing from "this poor man; and what good, I "wonder, will the torture of his broken "limbs do to the whole?" "There's "your ignorance," replies Philoſophy (obſerve how like an owl ſhe looks,) "there are other beings ſuperior to "men, and his torment may conduce "to their happineſs." "So one of theſe beings,

" beings, ſays the other, puſhed this
" poor fellow from the houſe-top to
" ſee what wry faces he would make
" for the good of the whole! I wiſh
" ſuch a Whole as this were at the De-
" vil: Such a bleſſed Company would
" reap great good in the bottomleſs pit.
" But hark ye, Mrs. Wiſdom, don't nod
" your fool's cap at me, but tell me
" how you prove all this, and how
" can the good of your Whole ariſe
" from an innocent man's torment?"
" O Sir, replies Philoſophy, I confeſs
" this is entirely inconceiveable*." Ha,
" indeed! ſays the other, then do you
" pleaſe to walk off with your rattle
" and bells, and give place to this wor-

* See the Origin of evil by S--- J—— Eſq. where this ſyſtem, and this confeſſion are both to be found.

" thy

" thy man, who is approaching to in-
" ſtruct the unhappy ſufferer in the
" filial ſubmiſſion and filial hope in-
" ſpired by Religion.

VOLTAIRE.

PHILOSOPHY in a fool's garb! You amaze me.

STERNE.

WHEN your Geniuſſes put ſuch egregious nonſenſe into the mouth of Philoſophy, the eye of juſt imagination can behold her in no other habit.

VOLTAIRE.

BUT you have not refuted the Scottiſh Philoſopher's doctrine of a fatal neceſſity.

STERNE.

STERNE.

I HAVE already refuted it by the moſt certain inference. Leaving all the labyrinths of phyſical and moral neceſſity, ſubjects with which men are not perfectly acquainted, let us come to the certain reſult of the whole, to this ſhort alternative, Is the Almighty Eternal * a good or an evil Being? Is he perfect or imperfect?

* Lord K——s's ſolution of how God is and is not the author of ſin, is truly remarkable. The intention of God and the ſinner, are different, ſays he; what God decrees "is to carry "on the great and good deſigns of Providence; "but they (*the Sinners*) have no ſuch purpoſe "in view, nor any other aim but to gratify "their own luſts and paſſions." And yet, according to our author's ſyſtem, the ſinner can have no intention

VOLTAIRE.

An English Philoſopher, my Lord Bolingbroke, confeſſes that the creation demonſtrates his omnipotence; but he affirms likewiſe, that men can bring no philoſophical proof of his goodneſs.

STERNE.

Yes, Bolingbroke ſays ſo, and what then? The perfect goodneſs of the Almighty Being is capable of as ſtrict demonſtration as that two and two are equal to four. Come, my Philoſopher, define me what conſtitutes an evil being?

intention but what God abſolutely decrees him to have, "admitting," to uſe his own words, "the poſſibility of none other."

ROUS-

ROUSSEAU.

IT is a depravity, or weakneſs.

STERNE.

AND its action is two-fold: Either it purſues ſome apparent happineſs which in reality is not ſuch; or it purſues an ungenerous happineſs by unjuſt means, by means that tend to the hurt of others. The firſt inſtance, the purſuit of falſe happineſs, which is implied in the definition of vice, is utterly irreconcileable with Omniſcience; and it is impoſſible, a contradiction in terms, that Omnipotence can have a motive for the ſecond. To ſuppoſe Omnipotence could be unjuſt, ſays Monteſquieu *, is to ſuppoſe the Almighty the moſt deteſtable Being, a

* In his Lettres Perſanes.

Being

Being wicked without the poſſibility of motive.

VOLTAIRE.

BUT evil does exiſt; therefore the permiſſion of it is an impeachment of the Almighty's goodneſs.

ROUSSEAU.

PHILOSOPHY ſhould be loth to ſay ſo. She will tell you that

Partial ill is univerſal good;

and that it is neceſſary there ſhould be ſuch a link as man in the chain of being, a link between the Brutes and Angels; and therefore man is juſt as perfect and happy as he ought to be. If this link were taken away, the ſtupendous whole muſt be deſtroyed; on

view

view of which, kindled into a noble enthuſiaſm, Philoſophy exclaims,

All this dread order break! for whom, for thee,
Vile worm! Oh madneſs, pride, impiety!

STERNE.

THESE are high-ſounding words; but after all, this Arabian tale is only *vox et preterea nihil.* It may be demonſtrated, that many links of the brutal creation may be wanted, and are wanted in many countries, without all this dread order being broken. We can very eaſily conceive that thouſands of degrees of angels might exiſt without man. You cannot prove, nor even conceive a neceſſity why angels ſhould be linked to the brutes. You produce the alluſion of a chain; but

ſions prove nothing: And how, in the name of wonder, is a thing of continued parts applicable to beings of individual exiſtence? Again: If ſuch a link as man is neceſſary, his miſery and guilt make him a ſtrange abſurd connective between brutal tranquility and angelical innocence and bliſs. Imperfect happineſs might become ſuch a link, but guilt could have no neceſſary part in it. Again: If for the ſupport of the whole ſuch a link is neceſſary for one hour, it muſt be neceſſary for ever. But let the Spirit of a poor African utter his feelings. He has heard our diſcourſe, and is burning with indignation at your Philoſophy.

Enter

Enter SPIRIT.

SPIRIT.

Is ſuch miſery as I have ſuffered neceſſary to the exiſtence and bliſs of angels!

All this dread order break, vile worm, for thee!

Yes for me: Yes, Eternal Juſtice will break it for me, who died the loweſt of mankind, and in the deepeſt miſeries of ſlavery! Oh, how ſhocking that plan of Providence which requires ſuch victims of miſery! But I leave you to your impiety, and retire to yonder argent fields, where with my anceſtors I ſhall remain in reſt, till the God of our country deſtroy evil and reſtore all Nature.

STERNE.

LET that poor African teach you how abſurd is that ſyſtem, which ſuppoſes that the ultimate perfection intended by God depends on the imperfection of the ſmalleſt part.

ROUSSEAU.

But Imperfection exiſts in man; and your argument, which confutes the Philoſophy of links, unavoidably leads back to the ſyſtem of abſolute neceſſity.

STERNE.

BY no means. How does it invalidate that cleareſt of all arguments which demonſtrates the goodneſs of the Almighty? If on the one hand there

there is ſome darkneſs, on the other there is the cleareſt light. If we cannot perfectly trace from whence evil came, we can nevertheleſs demonſtrate that it did not come from the almighty, all-perfect Being.

VOLTAIRE.

BUT his permiſſion is the ſame thing.

STERNE.

A ROUND aſſertion is of excellent uſe in modern Philoſophy; but you are not aware what you muſt prove before this aſſertion is good for any thing.

VOLTAIRE.

PROVE! why it is a ſelf-evident truth.

STERNE.

SOFTLY, my Philoſopher. You muſt prove, that you are exactly acquainted with the government of the Supreme, before you ſet limits to it, and ſay that permiſſion is the ſame as his abſolute act. But the human underſtanding can form no adequate idea of the mode of his government; the beſt which men can ſay is, that it cannot be involved in contradiction or abſurdity. You muſt alſo prove in ſupport of your aſſertion, that the Almighty treats his rational creatures as mere machines or irrationals; yet this is an abſurdity which the human underſtanding can clearly perceive; and therefore ſound reaſon will never aſcribe it to the government of the omniſcient

niſcient Almighty. Hence ariſes the utmoſt probability that evil owes its origin to the abuſe of free agency, and that it will have an end. But yonder Spirits who have been hearing our diſcourſe ſeem anxious to give their opinions. This, Rouſſeau, was an Egyptian Prieſt before the days of Moſes.

ROUSSEAU.

I LONG to hear him.

Firſt SPIRIT.

ALAS! has wiſdom died with the ancients! Typhon by his daring revolt gave birth to evil: The God Orus has already bound him in chains, and will in the end finally ſubdue him and reſtore all things.

STERNE.

AND this is one of the oldeſt of the Perſian Magi.

Second SPIRIT.

DREADFUL to the creation was the revolt of Arimanius; but the God Mythras has overcome him, and will at the end of the great year reſtore the perfection of both intellectual and material nature.

STERNE.

ALL antiquity talks loudly of a golden age, and that the preſent is not the original ſtate of Nature. Philoſophy may ramble through the limbo of Theory, and talk of her links and the good of the whole; but Reaſon ever was, and ever will be ſhocked

ſhocked at the ſuppoſition, that man, who is born to miſery as the ſparks fly upward, came in that imperfect ſtate from the hands of his Omnipotent Maker. Obſerve, yonder old Britiſh Druid, pointing to his miſletoe bough, aſſents to the belief of the reſtoration of Nature. This belief, Voltaire, has taken deep and univerſal root in the moſt ancient and diſtant nations, and is evidently to be traced in the groſſer fables of Greece and Rome, in the labours of an Hercules, and in the deliverance of an Andromeda. Here is a ſtriking proof of an Old Tradition that can only be aſcribed to Revelation. How unworthy of the Deity is the modern philoſophy of the origin of evil, which ſays, that it muſt for ever exiſt; and how deſpicable when compared with old

Tra-

Tradition! Yet how glorious above that, and explanatory of it, is Chriſtianity, the ſum of which is a promiſe of the final abolition of that imperfect ſyſtem, during which the whole creation groans under the ravages of Miſery and Evil, the cruel daughters of Guilt! Chriſtianity, that calls forth the nobleſt deſires and virtues of humanity, and aſſures them of increaſing vigour in immortal exiſtence!

ROUSSEAU.

WHILE infidel Philoſophy depreſſes, and repreſents them as vain meteors, glimmering for a while, and ſhortly to drop into nothing—I recollect with pleaſure how much I deſpiſed modern Philoſophy.

STERNE.

STERNE.

AND yet you went into enough of her fooleries. You only loved them when they were of your own begetting. You ſeem low-ſpirited, Voltaire: I will endeavour to enliven you, and irritate your vein for ridicule by preſenting you an object highly worthy of it. I will conjure up a Genius that will prove any thing whatever.

VOLTAIRE.

WHAT, will he prove that the moſt improbable is nevertheleſs more than probable?

STERNE.

THAT is an eaſy matter with him. Genius of Sceptical Philoſophy, ariſe.

VOLTAIRE.

HEAVENS, how he reſembles one of my friends!

STERNE.

YES, he has a good honeſt countenance, and does not want for learning, which he makes a dexterous uſe of, to prove or diſprove as he pleaſes. You know the monſtrous abſurdities of the Egyptian idolatry:

Quis neſcit—qualia demens
Egyptus portenta colat? Crocodilon adorat
Pars hæc: illa pavet ſaturam ſerpentibus Ibim,
Illic cæruleos, hic piſcem fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem venerantur—
. . . . . .
Porrum et cepe nefas violare, ac frangere morſu.
O ſanctas gentes, quibus hæc naſcuntur in hortis
Numina———

Birds, beaſts, and fiſhes, leeks and onions were all adored by beſotted Egypt.

Now

Now would you think that this motley idolatry was the ſame as the Chriſtian Religion, their difference being too frivolous to deſerve attention?

VOLTAIRE.

Be ſure I could not.

STERNE.

But our Genius will prove it. Come, open, Mr. Sceptic.

SCEPTIC.

* "It is ſtrange that the Egyptian "Religion, though ſo abſurd, ſhould "yet have borne ſo great a reſemblance "to the Jewiſh, that antient writers "even of the greateſt genius *were not* "*able to obſerve any difference betwixt*

* H——'s Natural Hiſtory of Religion.

"*them.*

" *them.* For it is very remarkable, that " both Tacitus and Suetonius, when " they mention that decree of the Se- " nate under Tiberius, by which " the Egyptian and Jewiſh Proſelytes " were baniſhed from Rome, expreſly " treat theſe Religions as the ſame; " and it appears, that even the decree " itſelf was founded on that ſuppoſi- " tion. Theſe wiſe heathens obſerving " ſomething in the general air, and ge- " nius, and ſpirit of the two Religions " to be the ſame, eſteemed the dif- " ferences of their dogmas too frivo- " lous to deſerve any attention."

VOLTAIRE.

He does not mention the Chriſtian Religion.

STERNE.

STERNE.

BUT his argument proves, that it is the ſame as the Egyptian; for the wiſe heathens, to whoſe judgment he appeals, have repreſented the Chriſtian Religion as the ſame with the Jewiſh*. And can you conceive a groſſer improbability than that all the banditti of Pagan Gods, with all their caprices, luſts, and villanies, did, and do actually ſomewhere exiſt?

VOLTAIRE.

I CANNOT conceive a groſſer.

STERNE.

LET us hear what Mr. Sceptic ſays.

* And have confounded them together even in a decree of the learned Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Vide Selden.

SCEP-

SCEPTIC.

* " If we examine without preju-
" dice the antient heathen mythology,
" as contained in the poets, we ſhall
" not diſcover in it any ſuch mon-
" ſtrous abſurdity as we may be apt
" at firſt to apprehend. Where is
" the difficulty of conceiving, that
" the ſame powers or principles,
" whatever they were, which formed
" this viſible world, men and animals,
" produced alſo a ſpecies of intelligent
" creatures of more refined ſubſtance
" and greater authority than the reſt?
" That theſe creatures may be capri-
" cious, revengeful, paſſionate, vo-
" luptuous, is eaſily conceived; nor is
" any circumſtance more apt amongſt

* H——e.

" ourſelves

" ourſelves to engender ſuch vices
" than the licenſe of abſolute authority.
" And, in ſhort, the whole mytholo-
" gical ſyſtem is ſo natural, that in
" the vaſt variety of planets and
" worlds, contained in this univerſe,
" it ſeems MORE THAN PROBABLE,
" that ſomewhere or other it is really
" carried into execution."

STERNE.

THIS is a large portion of faith, indeed; and yet this gentleman was ſo delicate in his creed, that he could not bring himſelf to believe one word of divine Revelation. But come, Mr. Genius, what is the beſt Philoſophy?

SCEPTIC.

Most undoubtedly the ſceptical *. It is the ſureſt † guide to truth, and it is all a ‡ heap of confuſion.

* Yet hiſtory demonſtrates the contrary. The following obſervations will ſtand the ſevereſt teſt. "No nation can proſper without piety; for where that fails, public ſpirit and every noble ſentiment will decay. The doctrine of looking up to an all-ruling Providence, and that of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, rendered the Roman people virtuous and great. In proportion as theſe doctrines were weakened by the falſe philoſophy of Epicurus, the minds of the Romans were impoveriſhed, and their manly patriotiſm was ſucceeded by effeminate ſelfiſhneſs, which quickly brought them to contempt and ruin." *Boſwell's* Account of Corſica.

† See H——e's Eſſays paſſim.

‡ See his character of Biſhop Berkley's works.

STERNE.

STERNE.

VERY well: And can men bring any proof that the creation was the work of a Creator?

SCEPTIC.

NONE at all. There is no connection between cauſe and effect: And beſides, men can only argue from experience; now the univerſe is a *ſingular effect* *; and therefore men can have no experience how it was made.

ROUSSEAU.

THIS is ſceptical confuſion, indeed! But let me aſk him, Have men any experience that a work can be without an author?

STERNE.

HE will not anſwer your queſtions, Sir. Tell me, from whence, Mr.

* H——e.

Sceptic, do you derive thoſe noble qualities, "activity, ſpirit, courage, "magnanimity, love of liberty, and "all the virtues that aggrandize a "people?"

SCEPTIC.

FROM a firm belief in the Pagan Gods; for we are quite "at our eaſe "in our addreſſes to ſuch gods, and "may without profaneneſs aſpire to a "rivalſhip and emulation of them. "One great incitement to the pious "Alexander in his warlike expeditions "was his rivalſhip of Hercules and "Bacchus, whom he juſtly pretended "to have excelled."

STERNE.

AND from whence do you derive cowardice, abject ſubmiſſion, and the other weakneſſes of the human mind?

SCEP-

SCEPTIC.

* " FROM the repreſentation of the " Deity as infinitely ſuperior to man- " kind; for this belief, though alto- " gether juſt, is apt, when joined " with ſuperſtitious terrors, to ſink " the human mind into the loweſt " ſubmiſſion and abaſement."

STERNE.

Do you mean to inſinuate that ſuperſtitious terrors are attendants on the belief of the infinite ſuperiority of the Deity?

SCEPTIC.

IF you had read the volumes I have written, you could not doubt that I

* H——e.

mean ſo. Beſides, my preſent argument expreſly demands it; for, obſerve that the glorious virtues which I have derived from the Pagan creed, ariſe from this; the eaſy familiarity with which one views theſe gods, and which made not only the Stoic Seneca, but even the mad Alexander eſteem himſelf as a better fellow than the beſt of them.

ROUSSEAU.

O STERNE, I am ſick of this Genius. Have I no better joys in the world of ſpirits than to hear the ravings of Philoſophy?

STERNE.

See, I have diſmiſſed him. I myſelf muſt now retire; but Swift is at hand.

Exit Sterne.

Enter

Enter SWIFT.

VOLTAIRE.

OH my friend, your preſence has relieved me from ſome painful qualms! You and I both wrote againſt Chriſtianity, and I ſee you are not damned: it is heaven to ſee you.

SWIFT.

INDEED, Voltaire, I am not. But what Demon poſſeſſed you to imagine I ever wrote againſt Chriſtianity? My heart burnt with indignation againſt the madneſs of Fanaticiſm and the ſhameleſs corruptions of the Church of Rome. In my *Tale of a Tub* I employed all the artillery of my wit

againſt theſe. But is that writing againſt the Chriſtianity of the New Teſtament? No; it is defending it, by expoſing the nonſenſe and trumpery that audaciouſly aſſumes that ſacred name. Never in my moſt unguarded mirth, when I laughed at ſuperſtition or fanaticiſm, never did I blend them with the idea of manly Religion or true Piety. There is this characteriſtical difference between your writings and mine; I carefully diſtinguiſh, and only laugh at bigotry and folly. But if you mention an abſurdity of a Profeſſor of Religion, Religion itſelf is repreſented as the cauſe. If you mention the ridiculous pretence of a crack-brained Bramin to Revelation, Revelation in every idea of it is treated with a ſly but obvious contempt. This is

the

the ſpirit that breathes through all your works. In mine, in innumerable places I have earneſtly argued for, and witneſſed the deepeſt regard for Chriſtianity—my heart ever deſpiſed an Infidel!

VOLTAIRE.

But I died a Chriſtian.

SWIFT.

Died, alas! flying for refuge to that idle Popiſh trumpery which my writings have ſo juſtly ridiculed.

But tell me, Voltaire, what was your chief motive for infidelity?

VOLTAIRE.

The love of Truth and of Virtue.

SWIFT.

SWIFT.

AND from reading his works, Rouſſeau, what would one think was his method of ſearching for theſe goddeſſes?

ROUSSEAU.

BY the maſs, a very odd one; 'twas like ſearching for ſun-ſhine in the fartheſt corner of a coal-pit.

VOLTAIRE.

YOU would have been more ſevere, had you ſaid, 'twas like ſearching for ſound reaſon in the works of Rouſſeau.

ROUSSEAU.

To be ſure, burleſque and miſrepreſentation are excellent guides to truth.

VOLTAIRE.

And the vagaries of theory never loſe ſight of reaſon; witneſs when you ſent your pupils to the beaſtly Hottentots for education and morals.

SWIFT.

And did theſe motives you pretend to, Voltaire, did theſe dictate your account of *L'amour Socratique?*

ROUSSEAU.

A most deteſtable depravity then poſſeſſed him, to give it the gentleſt name.

VOLTAIRE.

And what deteſtable depravity poſſeſſed Rouſſeau, when his heart ſwelled with

with rancour againſt his well intentioned benefactor Mr. H—e? You look angry, my Philoſopher of the Mountains; but pray talk of any thing you pleaſe except perſecution.

ROUSSEAU.

Good heaven! does the Author of Candide dare to pretend to the love of virtue? Was there ever ſo daring a burleſque of the juſtice of Providence!

VOLTAIRE.

What nobler part than to ridicule ſuperſtition?

ROUSSEAU.

To burleſque the principles of the pureſt Theiſm, the belief in God's moral government, is undoubtedly an excellent cure for ſuperſtition.

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

AND can you believe I was ſerious when I wrote Candide?

ROUSSEAU.

WHAT a pity is it then, that you had not choſen a motto from Solomon's proverbs! The fool who throws fire-bands, you know, pretends it was only in ſport; but others are ſeriouſly hurt by his amuſement.

VOLTAIRE.

AND no doubt your praiſe of ſelf-murder is well calculated to promote the good of human ſociety?

ROUSSEAU.

SELF-MURDER is in ſome caſes the dictate of the nobleſt feelings; It is often

often the dernier reſort of the greateſt minds; and it adds a finiſhing luſtre to the firſt of the Roman names.

SWIFT.

EVERY circumſtance I deny.—But before we came to moral argumentation, let us view what ſort of luſtre Self-murder has caſt on the firſt of the Roman names; alas, when the facts paſs in review before us, we ſhall ſeriouſly wonder what has bewitched the world in admiration. Let us behold the children and friends of Cato, apprehenſive of his purpoſe, with the tendereſt affection entreating him to continue among them as their guardian genius: Unmoved with their tears, he anſwers them with reproach and rage, and by force drives them from his preſence.

In

In the ſcuffle an affectionate ſlave preſumes to give his aſſiſtance, but has his teeth knocked down his throat by the enraged Cato, who ſoon after became his own executioner; and ſtill cruelly deaf to the entreaties of his friends, who would have dreſſed his wound, tearing up his bowels with his hands, unworthy of Philoſophy, he expired with all the fury of a wild beaſt dying under the ſpear of the hunter.

VOLTAIRE.

But if there is ſomething deteſtable in the rage of Cato, there is ſomething truly ludicrous in the deliberate affair of Seneca's prompting his wife to the virtue of Suicide. Our Stoic was above ſeventy when Nero ordered him to be

bled

bled to death; his wife was about twenty-ſeven; yet ſhe muſt voluntarily die along with her old huſband; and for what reaſon do you think? Nay, I could defy the Cumean Sybil or the witch of Endor to diſcover any other than that it was *mighty fine* to do ſo. Awful as the ſcene of death is, I cannot help ſmiling at the thought of the old pedant repeating his moral ſentences, while his young wife, pale and gaſping, was putting them in practice by bleeding to death.

SWIFT.

THE merit of an action is only to be eſtimated by the ſentiment which gave birth to it. Marcus Brutus is one of the admired Romans who died by ſelf-murder. Let us hear what he

ſays

ſays * was his motive: "I was engaged "I know not how, ſays he, into an "opinion which made me accuſe Cato "for killing himſelf, as thinking it an "irreligious act againſt the Gods, nor "any way valiant among men not to "ſubmit to Divine Providence, nor be "able fearleſsly to undergo whatever "may happen. But now in the midſt of "dangers, I am quite of a different "mind; for, if Providence ſhall not "diſpoſe of what I now undertake ac-"cording to our wiſhes, I reſolve to try "no further hopes, but will die †." He knew not how he came to imagine it was irreligious not to ſubmit to Divine Providence; and if Providence

* In a converſation with Caſſius the evening before the battle of Philippi.

† Life of M. Brutus.

would not immediately give him ſucceſs, he would ſtab himſelf. And is this, John-James, is this the language of a great mind?

ROUSSEAU.

I DO not argue for Brutus. I only aſſert the poſſibility of circumſtances in which Self-murder were virtuous. *

SWIFT.

IN every inſtance it is cowardly; for he who does it, does it to avoid ſomething which appears to him more terrible than death; ſomething which he dares not face. Neither is it the dictate of noble feelings. What can be more baſe and ungenerous than Cato's fortifying himſelf againſt the

* Rouſſeau in his Eloiſa vindicates ſelf-murder, his part in the following colloquy is therefore in character.

affection

affection of his children and friends? If you have one friend that loves you, what but the utmoſt baſeneſs could bear the thought of his weeping over your ſelf-murdered corpſe?

ROUSSEAU.

BUT the caſe may happen where one has no friend.

SWIFT.

WELL; I will take you upon your ſureſt ground, upon which even Plato would ſcarcely have attacked you. I hold ſelf-murder utterly unlawful in whatever condition we may find ourſelves, though not a tear will fall for us, though every hour comes loaded with anguiſh, and though hope may ſeem ſhut out at every avenue.

ROUSSEAU.

GRACIOUS heavens! did the God of mercy intend any of his creatures to be unhappy? No; let us think more religiouſly of his diſpenſations. In the conſtitution of humanity, it is impoſſible but that evil muſt be. Againſt this evil, when become too preſſing, God has afforded a remedy: He has given us the means of retiring from under its preſſure; and ſurely in giving us the means, he could not purpoſe to withhold the power.

SWIFT.

IT is thus, John-James, you deceive yourſelf and others. You tell me that becauſe God has given you a fore-finger, therefore you are allowed to employ

employ it in pulling the trigger of a piſtol applied to your own head.

ROUSSEAU.

ONCE more, I ſay, that Infinite Mercy cannot inſiſt upon my unhappineſs, cannot diſapprove of my endeavours to deliver myſelf from it.

SWIFT.

OF lawful endeavours, John-James. But here lies the argument; and by attending to this, we ſhall approach nigher to ſome concluſion. You imagine the lawfulneſs of the action ſufficiently implied by your propoſition, that God cannot intend the unhappineſs of his creatures. The propoſition we allow; but if God does not intend their unhappineſs, and if

misery is inflicted by his hand, how do you prove the lawfulness of withdrawing from under his correction? God inflicts misery either from motives benevolent or malignant; not from malignant surely, for that, to use no other, contradicts your own argument of his infinite goodness. If then he inflicts from benevolent, your crime of self-murder is aggravated by folly and ingratitude. This is no uncommon argument, John-James; but for that reason perhaps you have despised or overlooked it.

ROUSSEAU.

PERMIT me to suppose a case.

SWIFT.

SUPPOSE any case, the argument will return; and it is particularly perverse in

in you to hold out againſt an argument which proceeds upon your own propoſition; for if God cannot inflict but upon benevolent motives, our happineſs and not our miſery muſt be ultimately intended. But put the caſe?

ROUSSEAU.

SUPPOSE a man fallen into irremeable calamity.

SWIFT.

I UNDERSTAND you; but your ſuppoſition cannot be allowed; for how can any man know that his miſery is irremeable? Every day is witneſs to the moſt unexpected turns in human affairs. Had I converſed with you on earth, I would to have urged an argument which muſt have touched you as a

man of humanity: How ſhould any man know, but that in cutting himſelf off from Society, he has deprived numbers of happineſs, in the effecting of which, he might have been one day employed as the inſtrument?

ROUSSEAU.

But when all the marks of God's wrath and diſpleaſure are upon me, how do I know but that God may intend to make myſelf the inſtrument of his puniſhment, and that in withdrawing from Life I only execute his will?

SWIFT.

You aſk, How do you know but that God wills to make you the inſtrument

ment of your puniſhment? But with me, John-James, the very doubt would be an argument againſt the commiſſion of the action; for if it may be wrong, it is ſurely the part of a wiſe and good man to avoid the perpetration of it. Beſides, if you are convinced that the hand of divine puniſhment is pouring out the vials of its wrath upon you, it is enough; be aſſured the Almighty knows the exact meaſure; nor by any ſuggeſtions of your own, ſuggeſtions prompted by a moſt criminal impatience, think you can aſſiſt him in the execution of his will. Again, ſuffer me to your queſtion to oppoſe another: How are you certain that it was not his will to make the prolongation of your life your puniſhment, and that by ruſhing out of it,

you

man could decide upon his own damnation, it was the traitor Judas; yet if we conſider him as putting a period to his term of probation, we can have little doubt but that his other crimes were aggravated by his final act of ſelf-deſtruction. Were you a Chriſtian, I ſhould tell you, that your beſt arguments were no other than the ſuggeſtions of the Arch Deceiver, to ſhut the gates of hope againſt the wretched ſinner, and to turn him from repentance. As to your rhetorical flouriſh of the ſurgeon and rotten limb, though a mighty favourite with the gentry of your opinion, it may ſerve for an alluſion, but no further. The ſurgeon knows upon certainty and principle, that the limb muſt be amputated; but what is your evidence

for

for thinking that you are never more to be an uſeful member of ſociety, becauſe at preſent you are not ſuch? But ſuppoſe, what indeed I have already denied and diſproved, that a man could be abſolutely certain that his calamities were only to terminate in the grave; what then? is he therefore to blow his brains out? is there no heroiſm in patience? or is a filial acquieſcence to the Divine Will an unreaſonable duty, which may without guilt be refuſed? Leave it to the Atheiſt to aſſert theſe; but let us on the principles of Theiſm conclude, that "Suicide in any circumſtance is "rebellion againſt God."

ROUS-

ROUSSEAU.

By your concluſion, I obſerve, you only pretend to argue upon my principles; but how would you diſprove the lawfulneſs of ſelf-inflicted death to one who denies them?

SWIFT.

Why truly I ſhould not attempt it. To tell a fellow who acknowledges no God to ſuperintend on earth, or to reward or puniſh beyond the grave, that the diſpoſal of his life is not in his own hands, would be a hopeful piece of buſineſs indeed. For how could I think of evincing the illegality of an action, when the ground upon which the proof muſt be built is taken away? One might tell an Atheiſt, that by

by the prolongation of life he *might* poſſibly reſerve himſelf for better circumſtances, and that by ſhortening it he *might* deprive his deareſt friends of ſome happineſs which it *might* have been his fate to promote. But alas, theſe arguments, which applied to the Chriſtian, who has many more powerful motives to perſevere in nobly bearing his ſufferings, muſt have their due effect, to the Atheiſt will be mere mockery. For upon what reaſoning on his principles could you ſhew that a month's preſent and certain miſery is to be undergone for a twelvemonth's future and uncertain pleaſure? Or how would you evince that the happineſs of the Son is well purchaſed by the miſery of the Father? The Iriſhman's blunder would in his caſe be

ſtrict

ſtrict reaſoning; "What has Poſterity "done for him that he ſhould do ſo "much for Poſterity?" To feel his preſent miſery, he has only to caſt his eye around him; all is dark, comfortleſs, and heart-depreſſing; while to encourage him in perſeverance he is to look into the remote regions of poſſibility, and ſpy out ſome uncertain light glimmering upon the utmoſt verge of it. If he is willing to forego his chance of happineſs, what ſhould hinder him? You might here flouriſh I know, *à votre façon*, upon the godlike generoſity of that Hero who braves certain adverſity upon the diſintereſted and glorious views of being one day inſtrumental in the happineſs of his friends and country. But alas, my friend

of

of human Nature, where is this generous Atheiſt to be found? Muſt we look for ſuch heroic generoſity among men whoſe principles tend immediately to extinguiſh every generous purpoſe of the breaſt?

ROUSSEAU.

You would leave then a gloomy countryman of your own to put in practice his principles, and blow his brains out upon the firſt unlucky bet or rainy day?

SWIFT.

CERTAINLY, if I could not perſuade him of the fallacy of his principles. If a man will drink of a poiſoned bowl, what help for the conſequences of the infection?

ROUSSEAU.

So you would coolly recommend ſelf-murder to an Atheiſt?

SWIFT.

On certain ſimple conditions I would.—I would only require him to produce demonſtration that there is neither a God nor an hereafter.

VOLTAIRE.

Yet, as I ſaid at firſt, ſelf-murder even in an Atheiſt is a crime againſt ſociety.

SWIFT.

Of prejudice to ſociety, you ſhould ſay. What is ſociety to an Atheiſt when his connection with it is at an end? An Atheiſt by his principles is bound to

to no duty but ſelf-intereſt, and if he neglects that is accountable to none; and therefore, an Atheiſt by his own principles can be guilty of no crime. And here, my Philoſophers, let us remark the wiſdom of Shafteſbury and Monteſquieu, who to promote the cauſe of virtue would deſtroy its connection with, or dependence on, the belief of a Deity; nor let us forget the juſtice of your friend Bayle's aſſertion, that a community of Atheiſts would make excellent members of ſociety, much better ones than thoſe who have ſome miſtakes in Religion, and therefore are apt to quarrel about it.

VOLTAIRE.

BAYLE was a glorious luminary; he ſpent his life in the ſearch of truth,

though unhappily, by his own confeſſion, he always found error *.

SWIFT.

AND now, John-James, though to be inconſiſtent you know *c'eſt d'être Philoſophe*, though abſurd ingenuity is admired on earth; yet in theſe regions it meets the contempt it deſerves, and is here

Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne:

Either therefore ceaſe to acknowledge the providence and goodneſs of God, or ceaſe to defend ſelf-murder, which, even on the principles of Atheiſm, is in every circumſtance a cowardly action; for, again I repeat it, he who does it flies from ſomething which to him appears ſo dreadful that he dares not face it.

* Voltaire.

Mean

Mean while, Voltaire, let me aſk you a few queſtions. Would you like that your condition ſhould be the ſame with that of Mohammed?

VOLTAIRE.

God forbid it!

SWIFT.

You amaze me.—Have not you extolled his Religion as inſpiring the fineſt morals and the nobleſt ſpirit of devotion, and often too with a comparative ſneer at Chriſtianity? and are you afraid to take your eternal portion with the author of this glorious Religion?

VOLTAIRE.

O Swift, I know Mohammed's character. His pretending that God

rewarded his ſervices by a permiſſion to commit adultery; nay, that God ſent the angel Gabriel with a Koran, ordering one of his friends to deliver up to his brutal luſt the dear loved wife of his boſom, is ſuch impiety! never was man guilty of deeper. I know alſo the luſtful and cruel diſpoſition that his Religion inſpires.—

SWIFT.

You knew this, as indeed you muſt, and yet extolled that motley Religion. Your want of ſincerity will do you no good. How would you like the condition of your great Confucius?

VOLTAIRE.

THERE was no ſuch perſon. There might have been ſome old Chineſe of that

that name, whoſe leſſons of honeſty were admired by a rude and ignorant age, but who was as different from our idea of the philoſopher Confucius, as old Jupiter the ruſtic tyrant of Crete is from Homer's Jove: both were the fiction of ages.

SWIFT.

AND both of them were improved on the ideas that in different ages were borrowed from that Revelation which you would repreſent as eclipſed by the perfect Confucius.

You ſeem happy, Rouſſeau?

ROUSSEAU.

THE love of virtue that ever inſpired my boſom now fills me with joy. Beſides, I died in the chearful

hopes which are afforded by the Son of Mary, whoſe godhead my writings have acknowledged. God is good, and Virtue muſt be joyful; the ſtudy of my life was to write for Virtue, and I was perſecuted for it. Beſides, let the errors of my life be what they may, I will boldly approach the Supreme, and tell him, "'twas I wrote "Emilius," a work which I truſt will wipe out the faults of my whole life*.

* The following are his words, ſpeaking of his Emilius,——— *Liſez & jugez vous-mêmes. Malheur à vous, ſi, durant cette lecture, votre cœur ne benit pas cent fois l'homme vertueux & ferme, qui oſe inſtruire ainſi les humains. Eh! comment me reſoudrais-je à juſtifier cet ouvrage? Moi, qui crois effacer par lui les fautes de ma vie entiére; moi, qui mets les maux qu'il m'attire en compenſation de ceux que j'ai faits; moi, qui, plein de confiance, eſpére un jour dire, Juge ſuprême, daigne juger dans*

ta

SWIFT.

You have talked much of Virtue, 'tis true; But what think you of Chriſtianiſm?

ROUSSEAU.

THAT ſuch a ſyſtem ſhould have been contrived by the authors of the New Teſtament, is more impoſſible than all the miracles it contains *: Yet there are ſome things in it which no reaſonable man can believe *.

SWIFT.

WHERE there are ſuch evident ſtamps of Divinity, whether is a hum-

ta clémence un homme foible; j'ai fait le mal ſur la terre, mais j'ai publié cet écrit. What delirium of arrogance and ſelf-conceit! Alas, poor Rouſſeau!

* Both aſſerted by Rouſſeau.

ble acquieſcence in what appears difficult, or a pert refuſal of the whole becauſe ſome parts are above his comprehenſion; which of theſe parts, I ſay, is beſt becoming a man in his firſt and dark ſtate of exiſtence, called human life?

ROUSSEAU.

UNDOUBTEDLY the humble part.

SWIFT.

YET this you refuſed. Did the heathen world ever produce a perfect ſyſtem of morals?

ROUSSEAU.

No.

SWIFT.

DOES the New Teſtament preſent a perfect one?

ROUS-

ROUSSEAU.

Most gloriously it does; and my writings have acknowledged it.

SWIFT.

And your writings have endeavoured to undermine the divine authority of the New Testament. Cicero asks, "Where is the Philosopher that lives "according to his own fine precepts?" The Pagan world confessed there was a nameless something wanting to make the precepts of Virtue sink into the heart. The New Testament not only gives the most perfect system of morals, but comes with an authority which Philosophy can never supply. What service then have you been doing to Virtue by endeavouring to destroy

ſtroy its ſureſt ſupport, the authority which Revelation preſents? And what ſervice to mankind to return them to that wretched condition of which Cicero complains? As to your boaſted Emilius, what new tie have you there added to any duty? what new motive to any virtue? I ſee you would mention the education of children; alas! it is theory that in many caſes can never be brought into practice, and in others is as abſurd as Locke's propoſal for mothers to teach their children the Latin tongue. Beſides, are you certain there is no evil conſequence would ariſe from your ſcheme? The human breaſt earneſtly pants after certainty, and where the principles are fixed, Virtue is moſt vigorous; but does not your Emilius recommend

commend Sceptiſm? and to doubt is to wither the nerves of Virtue.—Alas, you are ſilent!—Where now is the preſumptuous appeal to the Almighty, "I wrote Emilius!" Alas, it will check your triumph, when at the awful bar of the Supreme, you are reminded that Self-murder is one of th virtues you have recommended.

ROUSSEAU.

You had your failings—pity mine—that appeal was the heat of delirium.—

SWIFT.

I BELIEVE it; and happy for you if the Judge find it ſuch. I will now tell you what I have ſome reaſon to think will be your different ſentences, which at this time will not be final. Voltaire, you have called Bayle a glo-

rious

rious luminary, and ſaid that he ſpent his life in the ſearch of truth, but always found error. Among the caverns of yonder valley he is now condemned to ſuffer the puniſhment of perverted talents. He is ſtone blind, and is ſurrounded by five or ſix hundred ghoſts of illiterate peaſants, to whom he frequently harangues. He has been about ſeven earthly days examining a block of marble to find whether it was lead or gold. At laſt he thought he made the important diſcovery: He called the ruſtics around him, and produced his arguments with all his wonted learning and ſubtilty; and ſtill inclining to the baſe ſide of the queſtion, ſumming up all his proofs, he confidently aſſerted that the block was lead. Heard you that burſt of ruſtic laughter and jeer?

jeer? His audience have undeceived him, and he now ſuffers from their contempt. Near to this glorious luminary will you, Voltaire, for ſome time be placed. You will often drink of a cup filled from the River of Forgetfulneſs; your former biaſs of ſoul and all your wit will ſtill remain, your death only will be forgotten. Thouſands of the Philoſophers of antiquity will daily attend you; their attention will pleaſe you, and your humour as wont will ridicule the follies of men; but, true to your former ſelf, though the abſurdities of ſuperſtition awake your ſatire, it will inſtantly transfer itſelf to the religion of Meſſiah, and blending it with the trumpery of jarring ſects, you will dreſs it out in the moſt ludicrous, even odious garb, as the weakneſs, the folly

folly of human nature. But your triumph will not be long. Touched by an angel, your delirium will leave you, and Chriſtianity, different from your picture of her as conſummate beauty from fouleſt deformity, will appear in the *ſimplex munditiis* of the New Teſtament. The contempt with which the Philoſophers will treat your unfairneſs will wound your ſoul with all the fever of ſhame; and while thus the days of your life are repeated, the preſence of Rouſſeau and his Governanté, the Journaliſts de Trevoux, the Abbé Des Fontaines, and all you have ridiculed on earth, will add ſcorpion ſtings to your puniſhment by their witneſſing the detection of your miſrepreſentations, and joining in the contempt they deſerve. The cup of Forgetfulneſs will

will again be adminiſtered to you, till every day of your manhood is repeated, and till every miſrepreſentation, and every impious and immoral ſentiment which your works contain, have recoiled upon yourſelf by expoſing you to ridicule and ſhame; and till, laſtly, your account of *l'amour Socratique* come forth. Here Ridicule will withdraw her leering ſmiles, but Indignation will burn in every eye that beholds you, while ſculking from region to region you will vainly endeavour to wipe out your ſtain. This, Voltaire, ere the final day will be your preparatory puniſhment: may it be purgatory too!

For you, Rouſſeau, a beam from heaven ſtole acroſs your ſoul at the hour of death; yet at certain periods

will you be doomed to wander the earth. At the evening hour an angel will take you to where the youthful and gay aſſemble in the Tavern: You will there hear your works praiſed, and virtue on every tongue; but you will alſo ſee their hearts: There you will ſee the effects of your works—a contempt of revelation, and a vague partial idea of virtue without any hold on the heart. As the wine inflames them, blaſphemy and a plaſtic God will furniſh converſation. Revenge will darken the ſoul of one, Luſt will boil up in the breaſt of another, and a fretful gloomy impatience of diſappointment will brood over the ſelfiſh mind of a third; till iſſuing out, the morning ſhall behold one plunging his ſword in the boſom of his friend,

another

another ſtealing to the embraces of his benefactor's beloved wife, and another applying a piſtol to his head, cruelly regardleſs of the tears of his friends, or of the anguiſh he is bringing on his aged Father.

ROUSSEAU.

HEAVENS, how you amaze me! My works recommend no ſuch crimes. And have not Chriſtians done the ſame?

SWIFT.

BAPTIZED people have done them all. But never did one who acted under the influence of the Chriſtian philoſophy proceed to theſe enormities; for its divine authority believed implies the greateſt reſtaint; but

where you have made that authority deſpiſed, the human paſſions are much too ſtrong for the vague and imperfect impreſſions of virtue which the beſt human philoſophy leaves on the heart. And if ſelf-murder, as you affirm, is in any caſe whatever allowable, what is to hinder every individual to imagine that his own petty diſguſt * amounts to the allowable caſe? For one's ownſelf muſt be the only judge; and to allow oneſelf to judge in ſo important a caſe, a caſe where Paſſion ſits umpire, what is this but to open the flood-gates of deſtruction upon mankind! O Voltaire, O Rouſſeau, what

* The celebrated philoſopher Zeno thought the aching of his finger amounted to the allowable caſe, and accordingly hanged himſelf.

a heaven

a heaven have you loſt! Had your talents never been employed to wound the intereſt of Piety and Virtue, what ſerenity might you now have poſſeſſed! But had your abilities been exerted in enforcing the obligations of Virtue, and in uniting her to Piety, her genuine mother, from which vain Philoſophy would often ſet her aſtray, how exalted would your bliſs have been! While perhaps roving from paradiſe to paradiſe, from ſtar to ſtar, with what extacy would you have looked down on the planet earth, when warmed by the thought that future angels were there ripening in every godlike endowment under the influence of your labours.—But enough;—you have loſt this heaven, and one of you in particular with very different feelings muſt caſt

caſt his eye on the earth.—And when the earth ſhall be no more, when the laſt Judgement ſhall arrive, would to God the innocence of your hearts may appear; and may it be allowed as an alleviation of the evil conſequences of your writings!

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